

White House: NO SMOKING GUN IN SYRIA



White House Chief-of-Staff Denis McDonough speaks during an interview with Bob Schieffer on CBS's "Face the Nation" in Washington, Sunday, September 8, 2013. (AP Photo/Chris Usher)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama's top aide on Sunday pressed the case for "targeted, limited consequential action" to degrade the capabilities of Syrian President Bashar Assad to carry out chemical weapons attacks as the White House mounted a major push to win support from a divided Congress and skeptical American public for a military strike.

White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough asserted that a "common-sense test" dictates that the Syrian government is responsible for a chemical weapons attack that Obama says demands a U.S. response. But he said the Obama administration lacks "irrefutable, beyond-a-reasonable-doubt evidence" that lawmakers who will start voting on military action this week are seeking.

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FULL PLATE



Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., left, and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., leave the White House in Washington, following a closed-door meeting with President Barack Obama to discuss the situation with Syria. Congress returns Monday, Sept. 9, to a contentious agenda of budget fights, health care, farm policy, possible limits on the government's surveillance of millions of Americans, and most poignantly, what to do about Syria.

(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

As Congress Returns, Syria, Budget, Debt In focus

**ANDREW TAYLOR
DONNA CASSATA
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress returns to work facing a momentous vote on whether the United States should attack Syria, a question that overshadows a crowded and contentious agenda that includes budget fights, health care, and possible limits on the government's surveillance of millions of Americans. When Congress reconvenes Monday after a five-week break, many lawmakers

stand as a major obstacle to President Barack Obama's proposed strikes against Syria amid fears of U.S. involvement in an extended Mideast war and public fatigue after more than a decade of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama insists the world must act.

He blames Syrian President Bashar Assad for gassing his own people, killing hundreds of people. The Syrian government has denied responsibility for the Aug. 21 chemical weapons

attack outside Damascus, and blames rebels.

On Wednesday, the 12th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the first showdown Senate vote is likely over a resolution authorizing the "limited and specified use" of U.S. armed forces against Syria for no more than 90 days and barring American ground troops from combat.

A final vote in the 100-member chamber is expected at week's end.

"I think we're going to get 60 votes."

"It's a work in progress," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said Friday.

Support for the president is stronger in the Democratic-led Senate than in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

There, Obama faces a difficult path to victory despite the backing of the top two Republican leaders, Speaker John Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor, and Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi for military strikes.

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Putin critic claims runoff in Moscow

STEVEN LEE MYERS

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MOSCOW - Exit polls for the first mayoral election in a decade Sunday showed that the incumbent had narrowly won the race, but his main challenger, one of President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critics, claimed he had won enough votes to have forced a second round. The initial results - not yet verifiable - laid the groundwork for a disputed out-

come in an election that had been widely viewed as an unusually competitive test of Putin's power and popularity after mass protests in 2011 and 2012 over the state of democracy in Russia. Sergei S. Sobyenin, the incumbent and Kremlin insider who was appointed mayor in 2010 after direct elections for the post had been abolished by Putin, appeared headed to a victory and a new five-year term. However, as polls

closed at 8 p.m., Alexei A. Navalny, the charismatic lawyer, blogger and opposition leader, cited exit polls showing that Sobyenin had won less than the minimum needed to avoid a runoff. "All the data from the exit polls that we have indisputably show there will be a second round in these elections," Navalny said, adding that he had received 35 percent of the vote, compared with 46 percent for Sobyenin. □



Alexei Navalny, a candidate for mayor of Moscow, leaves a polling station with his family in Moscow, Sept. 8, 2013. Exit polls for the first mayoral election in Moscow in a decade on Sunday showed that the incumbent Sergei Sobyenin had narrowly won the race, but Navalny claimed he had won enough votes to have forced a second round.

CARIBBEAN NEWS BRIEFS

Officials detain US man, seize \$477,000

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Authorities in the Dominican Republic say they have arrested a JetBlue employee who was carrying nearly half a million dollars at an airport. The Specialized Agency in Airport Security says U.S. citizen John Michael Dominguez was carrying \$477,000 when he flew in from New York early Saturday as a passenger and tried to pass through security at the Cibao International Airport, the country's third busiest airport. Officials say they are trying to determine where the money came from. JetBlue officials did not immediately return calls for comment.

Petrocaribe fund wraps up Haiti meet

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Caribbean and Latin American countries belonging to Venezuela's Petrocaribe oil fund have wrapped up a two-day conference discussing a new economic bloc. The late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez oversaw the creation of Petrocaribe with the aim of countering U.S. influence and unifying the regional oil industry with Venezuela at the helm. It provides hundreds of millions of dollars each year in long-term, low-interest loans and in deeply discounted oil to its 18 members in the region. The group on Saturday did not immediately release specific details about the meetings, which were held in private. Petrocaribe aid is especially popular in impoverished Haiti, which depends heavily on foreign aid. Haitian officials favor the Venezuelan money because it goes straight into the state coffers, instead of to private contractors or relief groups.

Man jailed on child pornography charge

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A Puerto Rico man has been sentenced to 50 years in federal prison after pleading guilty to production of child pornography involving his daughter and four stepdaughters. Luis Alberto Morales Badillo was accused of sexually abusing and engaging in sexually explicit conduct with the underage girls from 1999 to 2010. U.S. Attorney Rosa Emilia Rodriguez said this weekend that one of the girls was 4 years old at the time. The 42-year-old nurse was charged in May 2012 and pleaded guilty in November.

Judge eases rule against cross-dressing

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (AP) — A judge in Guyana has ruled that cross-dressing is a criminal offense only if it is done for an "improper purpose" such as prostitution. A colonial-era law has banned males from wearing female attire and females from wearing male attire in public or for any improper purpose. But in a weekend decision, Chief Justice Ian Chang ruled that people can't be found in violation of the law if they are cross-dressing "for the purpose of expressing or accentuating his or her personal sexual orientation in public." A Guyana group representing gays and lesbians has demanded that the government toss the law. Group official Zenita Nicholson said Sunday she is not happy with the judge's "dubious decision." She says transgender citizens will "continue to be vulnerable to human rights abuses."

Man acquitted in rape case fatally shot

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP) — A man recently acquitted of raping a 12-year-old girl in a church bathroom has been fatally shot in the Bahamas. Police say that 48-year-old church handyman Leroy Adderley was killed this weekend outside his home in the capital of Nassau. Local media reported that residents in the area clapped and sang as authorities carried away Adderley's body. No one has been arrested. A jury voted 6-3 to acquit Adderley in mid-August, six years after he had been charged.

Two deadly attacks shake Afghanistan

AZAM AHMED

SHARIFULLAH SAHAK

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KABUL, Afghanistan - Underscoring the continued threat to civilians in Afghanistan, a drone strike in an eastern province killed up to 16 people, Afghan officials said Sunday, while a Taliban assault in another province killed four intelligence officers and wounded more than 120 civilians. The drone strike occurred Saturday afternoon in the Watapur district of Kunar province, a stronghold for the insurgency ensconced in hard-to-access mountainous terrain. Afghan officials said the drone was targeting four insurgents who were picked up along the road by a truck with civilians riding in it, though reports differed on the num-

ber of passengers. Women and children were among the dead, the officials said. "The insurgents often force local drivers to give them rides in their trucks," said the Kunar police chief, Abdul Habib Saidkhail. Coalition officials confirmed the strike, which they said killed 10 insurgents. Officials said they had no initial reports of civilian casualties, but that they would investigate. President Hamid Karzai condemned the drone strike Sunday, calling the attack on women and children against all international norms. The president did not appear to immediately wade into the debate over drones in the short statement. The Taliban attack occurred Sunday morning

in the capital of Wardak province, Maydan Shahr, where a vehicle packed with explosives detonated outside the Afghan intelligence headquarters. Five insurgents armed with rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles then tried to breach the building, said Gen. Jamil Khan, the deputy police chief of Wardak province, but they were quickly killed. At least four agents for the National Directorate of Security were killed in the attack, as well as a police officer. The bomb, which rocked the area around the provincial directorate offices, spread shards of shrapnel glass and wood into the surrounding area, wounding a number of civilians, a spokesman for the governor's office said. □

White House: Proven Assad link to gas attack lacking

Continued from front

"This is not a court of law. And intelligence does not work that way," White House chief of staff Denis McDonough said, part of a five-network public relations blitz Sunday to build support for limited strikes against Assad. "The common-sense test says he is responsible for

this. He should be held to account," McDonough said of the Syrian leader who for two years has resisted calls from inside and outside his country to step down. McDonough pressed the case for "targeted, limited consequential action to deter and degrade" the capabilities of Assad's re-

gime "to carry out these terrible attacks again. The U.S., citing intelligence reports, says sarin gas was used in the Aug. 21 attack outside Damascus, and that 1,429 people died, including 426 children. The number is higher than that, said Khalid Saleh, head of the press office at the anti-Assad Syrian Coal-

ition who was in Washington to lobby lawmakers to back Obama. Some of those involved in the attacks later died in their homes and opposition leaders were weighing releasing a full list of names of the dead. But the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which collects information from a network of

anti-government activists, says it has so far only been able to confirm 502 dead. In an interview Sunday, Assad told U.S. journalist Charlie Rose there is not conclusive evidence about who is to blame and again suggested the rebels were responsible. From Beirut, Rose described his interview that is set to be re-



Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., speaks during an interview with Bob Schieffer on CBS's "Face the Nation" in Washington Sunday. Recent opinion surveys show intense American skepticism about military intervention in Syria, even among those who believe Syria's government used chemical weapons on its people. "It's an uphill slog," said Rogers, who supports strikes on Assad.

(AP Photo/CBS News, Chris Usher)

leased Monday on television shows hosted by Rose. Asked about Assad's claims there is no evidence he used the weapons, Secretary of State John Kerry told reporters in London: "The evidence speaks for itself."

Obama has planned his own public relations effort. He has scheduled six network interviews on Monday and then a nationally televised speech from the White House on Tuesday, the eve of the first votes in Congress.

On Wednesday, the Democratic-led Senate is expected to hold the first showdown vote over a resolution that would authorize the "limited and specified use" of U.S. armed forces against Syria for no more than 90 days and barring American ground troops from combat. A final vote is expected at week's end.

A vote in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives appears likely during the week of Sept. 16.

Obama faces a tough audience on Capitol Hill. A survey by The Associated Press shows that House members who are staking out positions are either opposed to or leaning against Obama's plan for a military strike by more than a 6-1 margin.

"Lobbing a few Tomahawk missiles will not restore our credibility overseas," said Rep. Mike McCaul, the Texas Republican who chairs the House Homeland Security Committee.

Added Rep. Loretta Sanchez, a California Democrat: "For the president to say that this is just a very quick thing and we're out of there, that's how long wars start." □

Sept 11 Museum putting hallowed artifacts in place

MEGHAN BARR
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A cavernous museum on hallowed ground is finally nearing completion, far below the earth where the twin towers once stood. Amid the construction machinery and the dust, powerful artifacts of death and destruction have assumed their final resting places inside the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

A vast space that travels down to the bedrock upon which the towers were built, the museum winds its way deeper and deeper underground, taking visitors on a journey to the very bottom. Already on display are several pieces of mangled steel and metal recovered

from the World Trade Center towers, each one telling a different story of the terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The first relics that visitors will see are two massive pieces of structural steel that rose from the base of the North Tower. Now the rusty red columns soar above ground into the sunlit glass atrium that encloses the entrance to the museum. "They're so large — about 70 feet (21 meters) tall — that we built the museum around them," explained Joseph Daniels, president of the memorial and museum.

Down a long ramp, visitors will peer down to glimpse the last piece of steel removed from ground zero in 2002, which sits inside a

gaping silvery chamber that drops to the lowest level of the museum.

Further down the ramp, visitors will discover a mangled and twisted piece of steel that Daniels calls "impact steel." That's because this piece of the building was actually destroyed by the impact of Flight 11 slamming into the North Tower. "You can see how, at the bottom, the columns are bent back," Daniels said. "That's because Flight 11's nose, when it pierced the building, it bent steel like that."

Perhaps the most chilling part of the museum, in its current form, is a battered staircase that leads down to bedrock, where the exhibits will be displayed. Sandwiched between an

escalator and a staircase that will be used by museum visitors, the "survivor's stairs" provided an escape route for hundreds of people who fled from the towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

When completed in the spring, the museum will transport people through time from events leading to the 9/11 attacks all the way to the current events of today.

And even when its doors open, the museum will always remain a work in progress.

"This is a museum, I like to say, that's not about answers," Greenwald said. "It's a museum about questions. And we end with questions, and we then invite the public to participate in that dialogue." □



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As Congress Returns, Syria, Budget, Debt In focus

Continued from front

The Syria vote poses a dilemma for Obama's Democratic allies in Congress. Many strongly opposed the war in Iraq but are reluctant to undercut a president from their own party. The crucial player is Pelosi, a proven vote-getter. "A lot of members have constituents who have not been persuaded and I think a part of that in-

ability to be persuaded is that they're thinking about Iraq," Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland said Friday after one of many classified briefings for lawmakers. "That's what I'm hearing in my district even from people who are extremely supportive of the president." Senior administration officials will speak to lawmakers in advance of the president's speech to the nation Tuesday night.

A House vote is likely the week of Sept. 16. Even before Syria, Congress faced a busy and difficult session packed with battles. Obama and his allies in the Democratic-run Senate face fights from House Republicans over bills to fund government agencies and raise the ceiling on federal borrowing to avert a market-rattling government default. Then there



Senate Majority Leader, Democrat Harry Reid of Nevada heads to the Senate floor to introduce a resolution for the authorization of military action in support of President Barack Obama's request for a strike against Syria. Congress returns Monday, Sept. 9, to a contentious agenda of budget fights, health care, farm policy, possible limits on the government's surveillance of millions of Americans, and most poignantly, what to do about Syria. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

are efforts by conservatives to cut off money for Obama's health care reform law, which will begin to be fully implemented in the coming months. After Syria, Congress's most immediate task is passing a temporary spending bill to prevent much of the government from shutting down on the Oct. 1 start of the new budget year. The stopgap measure would buy time to work out funding government programs over the next 12 months, but even its passage is in doubt. Republicans are considering whether to use the measure as a last-ditch assault on Obama's expansion of federally subsidized medical care and new requirement that millions of people without health insurance either buy it or pay penalties to the Internal Revenue Service. Republican leaders are eager to avoid an impasse and government shutdown. They had signaled earlier that they prefer a straightforward temporary

spending bill that would keep agencies running at current budget levels, reflecting the automatic, across-the-board spending cuts in place for the past six months. A grass-roots campaign among Republican activists over Congress' August recess has increased pressure on the leaders to attach the health care provision, but a Boehner spokesman said no decision has been made. Congressional Democrats and the White House are eager to reverse the sweeping spending cuts, and many defense hawk Republicans who oppose cuts for the Defense Department would like to as well. But there have been no fruitful negotiations between the White House and House Republican leaders. Negotiations between White House officials and a small group of Senate Republicans collapsed last month over familiar disagreements over tax increases and cuts to popular federal benefit programs. □

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Band of Republicans pushes immigration in US House



Florida State Sen. Daniel Webster, R-Winter Garden, speaks at a Senate session in Tallahassee, Fla. In the five weeks since he declared his support for comprehensive immigration reform, now Republican Rep. Daniel Webster, R-Fla., has gotten an earful from his constituents, and as he returns to Washington this week, he faces an even tougher crowd: fellow Republicans.

(AP Photo/Phil Coale)

MICHAEL J. MISHAK
Associated Press

GROVELAND, Florida (AP)

— A small but growing group of Republican lawmakers in the House of Representatives are supporting an eventual path to citizenship for millions of people who are living in the U.S. illegally. But these Republicans are facing the daunting challenge of trying to persuade colleagues to follow them.

The Democratic-controlled Senate has already passed on a bipartisan basis a comprehensive immigration reform bill that provides a path to citizenship for people living in the U.S. illegally while tightening border security. But it has stalled in the Republican-controlled House.

Rep. Daniel Webster is among about two dozen Republican lawmakers who support a comprehensive immigration overhaul but he has gotten an earful from constituents in his Florida district.

One constituent told the second-term Republican that immigrants carry disease. Another said immigrants would steal jobs away from Americans.

"You cannot stop illegal immigration by rewarding it," another man said at a recent town hall-style meeting in Groveland, a rural community west of Orlando. "Amnesty is a reward."

As Congress returns to work this week after its summer break, Webster faces perhaps an even tougher crowd: fellow Republicans. Most Republicans oppose this approach on citizenship, and there is little political incentive for them to change their minds. Only 24 of 233 Republicans represent districts where more than one-quarter of their constituents are Hispanic. Even so, some in the Republican Party argue that its future hinges on whether the House finds a way to embrace an immigration overhaul, which is a crucial issue for the country's fast-growing bloc of Hispanic voters.

Supporters of a path to citizenship point to demographic changes and business backing that have helped sway Webster, who for years opposed immigrant-rights legislation, as potential motives for wavering lawmakers to sign

on. "I think as a country we need to do something," Webster said in an interview, echoing the rhetoric of Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and other prominent Republicans. "Doing nothing is amnesty."

The small but growing band of Republicans is trying to strike a balance between conservative activists who want border security and immigration advocates who want a path to citizenship.

Many come from swing districts with sizable Hispanic populations that could make a difference in next year's elections, tipping the balance of power in the Republican-controlled House. The lawmakers also feel the pressure from business interests that rely on immigrant labor.

At the same time, conservative taxpayer groups who typically fund Republican primary challenges have remained largely silent on immigration. Anti-immigration activists have failed to organize large-scale demonstrations or generate the kind of public backlash that killed Congress' last attempt to remake immigration policy, in 2007. Immigrant advocates, on the other hand, have waged a well-funded, aggressive campaign to push for the legislation.

"Congresspeople who may have been on the fence are realizing it's safe to get in the water," said Ana Navarro, a Republican strategist who led Hispanic outreach for Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign in 2008. "There is safety in numbers." □

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The slogan of NYC mayor's race: the middle class



Bill Thompson, running in the NYC Mayor's race, foreground second from left, waves as he makes his way along Eastern Parkway in the Brooklyn borough of New York during the West Indian Day Parade.

(AP Photo/Tina Fineberg)

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It's become the common catchphrase for those seeking to lead the biggest U.S. city: New York is increasingly out of reach for the middle class.

That sounds inarguable in the home of the \$125 million penthouse, the \$1 million parking spot and the \$295 burger. And it's a strategic line for candidates looking to capitalize on the view among many that ultra-rich Mayor Michael Bloomberg has been out of touch with the average person.

But is it just populist campaign rhetoric, or is the Big Apple really hollowing out at the socio-economic core?

Key statistics are mixed but indeed sketch a city of increasing economic extremes and a crunch in the middle. It's a trend nationwide, but the wealth has raced to the top faster here.

From a pier in Brooklyn's middle-income Sheepshead Bay, charter fishing boat captain Keith Kmiotek sees a New York that's gotten tougher for middle-class or working-class people.

His father bought a house in the city on a carpenter's income; Kmiotek, now a married father himself, rents and doesn't see a clear path to buying. And he's frustrated by what he considers a tax structure that works for the wealthy and a social-service system directed at the indigent.

"You're choked out" as a New Yorker in the middle, Kmiotek says. "You've either got to be very poor or very rich."

That's a theme Public Advocate Bill de Blasio has hammered on his way to a

big lead in the polls ahead of Tuesday's Democratic mayoral primary, telling a "tale of two cities" with have-it-alls on one side, have-nots on the other and the center "in danger of disappearing."

Rival Christine Quinn, the City Council speaker, speaks frequently of her "actual record of delivering for middle-class New Yorkers." Former U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner has built his campaign around a series of ideas to aid "the middle class and those struggling to make it."

It's such a theme that a debate Tuesday featured a video montage of them and fellow Democratic hopefuls City Comptroller John Liu and former Comptroller Bill Thompson repeating the words "middle class." Other major candidates also have talked up plans to help people either get to or stay in the middle class. Tracking the middle class is tricky because there's no standard definition of what it is. Various research reports conclude it has shrunk in New York City and nationwide during roughly the last decade, continuing a trend that dates to the 1970s. Reports also find the gains increasingly concentrated in the top rungs of the income ladder, a shift particularly pronounced in New York.

"The stratification is not new. It's the degree and the dimensions," says Fred Siegel, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank.

Under one widely used calculation of income inequality, called the Gini index, New York City outranks the 14 next-biggest U.S. cities and the nation as a whole. □

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Syria: Opposition seizes contested village north of Damascus

JAMAL HALABY
Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — Syrian rebels led by al-Qaida-linked fighters seized control of a predominantly Christian village northeast of Damascus, sweeping into the mountainside sanctuary in heavy fighting overnight and forcing hundreds of residents to flee, activists and locals said Sunday. The battle over Maaloula, an ancient village that is home to two of the oldest surviving monasteries in Syria, has thrown a spotlight on the deep-seated fears that many of Syria's religious minorities harbor about the growing role of Islamic extremists on the rebel side in the civil war against President

Bashar Assad's regime. The prominence of al-Qaida-linked fighters has factored into the reluctance of Western powers to provide direct military support to the rebels. It has also figured in the debate underway in the U.S. Congress over whether to launch military strikes against Syria in retaliation for an alleged chemical weapons attack last month. After days of clashes in and around Maaloula, rebels captured the village following fierce fighting late Saturday, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group. Observatory director Rami Abdul-Rahman said the assault was led by Jabhat al-Nusra, an



A Syrian military soldier fires a heavy machine gun during clashes with rebels in Maaloula village, northeast of the capital Damascus, Syria. Rebels including al-Qaida-linked fighters gained control of Maaloula, Syrian activists said Sunday.

al-Qaida-affiliated group, as well as by the Qalamon Liberation Front. He said around 1,500 rebels were inside Maaloula, while the army had the village surrounded. Syria's state news agency provided a dramatically different account of the battle, saying the military

reported "progress" in its offensive in Maaloula. "The army continued its military operation against terrorist elements in Maaloula village and its vicinity, inflicting a heavy casualty in the ranks of the terrorists, including their leaders," the news agency said. State-run TV reported that

all churches in Maaloula were now safe and the army was chasing gunmen in the western hills. But residents of Maaloula reached by telephone described fierce battles in the streets that forced them and other locals to flee as opposition fighters flooded the village. □



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Iran foreign minister Zarif criticizes Syria strike plan

ADAM SCHRECK
Associated Press
BAGHDAD (AP) —

Iran's new foreign minister on Sunday criticized possible U.S.-led strikes on Syria as outside the bounds of the United Nations charter, saying the use of force is illegal.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif made the comments while visiting the Iraqi capital Baghdad. The visit, his first official trip since taking office last month, underscored the growing links between the two Shiite-led neighbors and their shared opposition to military strikes in Syria.

"I do not know why those who say all options are on the table do not understand the fact that civilized countries 65 years ago ... rejected in the charter of the United Nations (the) resort to force as an illegal practice," Zarif said, breaking away from his native Farsi during a press conference to speak in English in comments clearly directed at the United States and its allies.

Iran is the main regional backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose regime also maintains strong ties to Russia. Assad's troops are battling largely Sunni rebels who receive support from Sunni countries such as Turkey and the Gulf states.

Zarif was met on arrival in Baghdad by his Iraqi counterpart, Hoshyar Zebari. He also held talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and the parliament speaker, Osama al-Nujaifi. Although Iraq is officially neutral in the conflict, its Shiite leadership is worried about the threat posed by Sunni extremists, including

Iraq's al-Qaida branch, fighting among the rebels. It repeatedly has called for a negotiated political solution to the crisis.

Nujaifi, Iraq's most senior Sunni Arab politician, also expressed concern about domestic fallout from a Syria strike Sunday.

"We believe that the strike will not benefit Syria, but instead it will spark a fire that could extend to Iraq and neighboring countries," he said.

"A strike will not bring a solution to the crisis. It will only worsen the situation more and more."

Iraq's prime minister last week reiterated Baghdad's opposition to foreign involvement in the Syrian conflict, warning that a military strike could have unforeseen consequences.

Zarif echoed those fears in his comments in Baghdad, saying those "who want to start a war cannot control the course of the war or end it."

"The U.S. president has entered a trap set by others ... against his personal wishes. We hope that he would get out of this trap," Zarif said, according to a translation of his comments into Arabic.

The United States has been pressuring Iraq for months to do more to stop Iranian flights suspected of carrying weapons to Syria from transiting its airspace. Iraqi officials have carried out some spot checks of Iranian planes and say they've found nothing.

Iran and Iraq fought a ruinous war from 1980 to 1988. The two countries have bolstered ties considerably since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that ousted Saddam Hussein. □

Israel deploys "Iron Dome" near Jerusalem



Israeli soldiers are seen near an Iron Dome battery near Jerusalem, Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013. The Israeli military refused comment on the matter, citing operational protocol.

(AP Photo/Gil Yohanan)

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military has deployed an "Iron Dome" missile de-

fense battery in the outskirts of Jerusalem.

Associated Press video

footage showed the missile defense system positioned there Sunday afternoon. The Israeli military refused comment, citing operational protocol. Israel is concerned that Syria, or a group allied with the regime like Hezbollah, could launch missiles at Israel if the U.S. attacks over its alleged use of chemical weapons against civilians. Even though Israel believes it unlikely that Syria will attack the Jewish state, it is making preparations just in case. It has deployed air defense systems, drafted a small amount of reserve soldiers and is handing out gas masks. The "Iron Dome" system has shot down hundreds of rockets launched by Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip at Israeli cities. □



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Italian former Premier Silvio Berlusconi attends a meeting with the People of Freedom party's lawmakers in Rome, Italy. Berlusconi is turning to Europe's human rights court over punishments for his tax fraud conviction, the media mogul's aides said Sunday. (AP Photo/Riccardo De Luca)

FRANCES D'EMILIO
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Former Premier Silvio Berlusconi is turning to Europe's human rights court in a bid to avoid a ban on public office and other punishments for his tax fraud conviction, the media mogul's aides said Sunday.

The politician and media magnate was found guilty of artificially inflating the amounts paid for film rights by his Mediaset empire to reduce the company's tax liabilities. Berlusconi claims he is an innocent victim of magistrates who sympathize with the left, but the verdict was upheld by Italy's top criminal court last month.

His top aide, Angelino Alfano, said the petition to the Strasbourg, France-based tribunal "shows that the Berlusconi case isn't closed."

Alfano didn't say when or on what grounds the petition to the European rights court was filed. But, "we are really confident, that at the European level, we can reach a finding of innocence that so far in Italy hasn't been possible," he said.

Italy's Court of Cassation confirmed a four-year prison term — though Berlusconi is unlikely to actually serve it — and also ordered a Milan appeals court to determine the length of a ban on serving in public office from one to three years.

A Senate panel Monday

Berlusconi appeals case to EU rights court

starts formally discussing if Berlusconi must surrender his Senate seat. That deliberation isn't based on the ban ordered by the Cassation Court, but a 2012 law says those sentenced to more than two years in prison are ineligible to hold public office for six years. The president of the Sen-

ate panel insisted its work would go forward without waiting for a decision from Strasbourg.

"What will we do if it (the court) takes 10 years to evaluate" Berlusconi's bid? Dario Stefano, a left-wing senator, asked Rome daily *Il Messaggero*. "I believe that law mandates us to

vote" now on whether Berlusconi loses his seat.

Eventually, the entire Senate will vote on whether to strip Berlusconi of his seat. Berlusconi's lawyers have contended that because the tax fraud occurred many years before the law was made, the media mogul shouldn't be kicked out

of Parliament.

The human rights courts rejects most petitions, but if it does take up Berlusconi's recourse and rule in his favor, Italy would be expected to abide by the ruling, since its decisions are binding on the 47 countries, including Italy, in the Council of Europe. □

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Australia PM-elect Tony Abbott burnishing his image

MATT SIEGEL

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SYDNEY - The prime minister-elect of Australia, Tony Abbott, wasted no time Sunday in burnishing his image as a disciplined national leader, amid speculation about the future of the Labor Party led by Kevin Rudd, which was handily defeated by Abbott's conservatives in national elections over the weekend. On Saturday, voters delivered a stinging defeat to the Labor Party after its six tumultuous years in power, giving a strong mandate to the conservative Liberal-National coalition, if not necessarily to its leader. The socially conservative Abbott has never been a hit with voters, and his first task will be convincing Australians that the coalition's mandate and his own are one and the same. After the vote, Australians awoke Sunday morning to find a couple of familiar sights on TV: the laser-focused Abbott clothed in brightly colored Lycra for one of his signature long-distance cycling sessions, and the Labor Party leadership

bickering about internal politics. Rudd, who served as prime minister from 2007 to 2010, returned to the leadership in June after a nearly two-year campaign by his supporters culmi-

oned Gillard in the hope of averting a landslide loss, was ultimately unable to shake the impression that it was more focused on personal feuds than on pressing issues like the slowing

seats for the coalition, a major swing in the 150-seat lower house. Independent candidates and the Greens Party hold the remaining seats, although a few races were still too

of Representatives, the lower house where governments are formed, the situation is far murkier in the Senate. That could cause problems for Abbott as he seeks to enact major policy changes like a paid parental leave plan he proposed during the campaign and the repeal of Labor's emissions trading program and a tax on mining company profits. Australia's bicameral legislature is similar in structure to the United States Congress, with both chambers involved in passing legislation. The composition of the Senate remained unclear Sunday, and few independent senators and single-issue parties seemed poised to take the balance of power in that chamber, a role held by the Greens in the current Parliament.

If a deadlock in the Senate prevents Abbott from pushing through his legislative agenda, he has the option of taking the rare step of dissolving Parliament and calling a double-dissolution election, in which all members of both houses must run in an election intended to break the deadlock. □



Australian opposition leader Tony Abbott, third left, his daughters Frances, left, Louise, second right, Bridget, right, and his wife Margaret, second left, come to the stage to celebrate Tony's election victory in Sydney, Saturday, Sept. 7, 2013, following his win in Australia's national election.

(AP Photo/Rob Griffith)

nated in a party coup that ousted Julia Gillard, the first woman to serve as Australia's prime minister. Gillard did not run in this election, and has said that she is retiring from politics. But the Labor Party, which aban-

of Australia's mining-driven economy and the record number of asylum seekers trying to reach the country in dangerous and crowded boats. Labor captured 57 seats in the next Parliament compared with 88

close to call, according to the Australian Electoral Commission. The two main parties are separated by a razor-thin margin in the current Parliament, with Labor holding 72 seats against the coalition's 73.

Although the balance of power is clear in the House

Mexican left slams oil reform

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A Mexican leftist leader has rallied thousands in Mexico City to oppose President Enrique Pena Nieto's proposal to open the state-owned oil sector to profit-sharing contracts with private firms.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador calls the reform proposal "treason" and "a filthy, shameless robbery." The former presidential candidate said Sunday that Mexico's proven reserves lie on land and in shallow coastal waters,

and no private firms are needed to drill for that oil. Pena Nieto proposed the reform in August, saying state-owned oil monopoly Pemex needs foreign expertise and technology in shale gas and deep-water reserves.

Pena Nieto pledged to announce another reform to rework the country's inefficient tax policy.

Lopez Obrador claims the president will tax Mexicans more to replace revenue lost because of the planned oil privatization. □




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Rodman says he met Kim Jong Un again

Aritz Parra

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Retired NBA star Dennis Rodman left North Korea Saturday, professing his affection for autocratic leader Kim Jong Un and angrily rejecting calls to lobby for the release of imprisoned American citizen Kenneth Bae.

Despite earlier calling on Kim to set Bae free, Rodman said the Christian missionary's fate was none of his business.

"Guess what? That's not my job to ask about Kenneth Bae," Rodman told reporters upon arrival at the airport in China's

capital, Beijing.

"Ask (President Barack) Obama about that. Ask Hillary Clinton," a visibly agitated Rodman shouted, referencing the former secretary of state.

Chomping an unlit cigar, the typically flamboyant Rodman displayed a stack of photos showing him hugging Kim, laughing and conversing with him over a meal, and the two of them watching a basketball game together.

The NBA Hall of Famer and five-time championship winner said the two had formed a close bond over the course of

his two visits to the isolated communist dictatorship.

"He's my friend for life. I don't care what you guys think about him," Rodman said.

Wearing designer sunglasses and a stocking cap adorned with metallic spangles, Rodman quickly flashed with anger when asked about Bae, hurling obscene remarks back at reporters who quizzed him about the purpose of his trip. At one point, he had to be restrained by a member of his entourage before being bundled into a waiting car.



Retired NBA star Dennis Rodman, center, walks past journalists at the Beijing capital airport in Beijing, China. Rodman left North Korea Saturday, professing his affection for autocratic leader Kim Jong Un and angrily rejecting calls for him to lobby for the release of imprisoned American citizen Kenneth Bae.

(AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

Rodman told The Associated Press as he was leaving his hotel in Pyongyang that Kim had

spoken about his visiting again, and that Kim "really actually wants to change things." □

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This weekend:

Widespread Brazil protests mark independence day



A man holds a sign that reads in Portuguese "Respect, I'm a teacher, the vandal is the state" at a burning barricade set up by protesters in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Saturday, Sept. 7, 2013.

(AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo)

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Police used tear gas and rubber bullets to scatter anti-government protesters who interrupted an independence day military parade in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday, and demonstrations in dozens of other cities led to some scuffles between marchers and police.

Authorities said they arrested at least 10 people in Rio, and at least six marchers were injured.

It was among more than 100 planned demonstrations across Brazil, with unions, student groups, anarchists and other groups calling for an end to political corruption and drastically improved public services in health, transportation, education and secu-

rity. In the capital of Brasilia, about 1,000 protesters gathered in front of Congress. While it was peaceful for the most part, police and activists clashed at times. "We're here to remind the politicians that we'll remain vigilant," said Carolina Santos, a 24-year-old at the demonstration in Brasilia. "We don't want corruption in public institutions and we want political reform that gives more power to the people."

The actions Saturday were not nearly as large as those in June, when more than 1 million people took to the streets on a single night and violent clashes with police occurred in scores of cities.

A Saturday afternoon match in Brasilia between Brazil's national football team and Australia drew one of the protests.

Police clashed with several hundred protesters near the stadium before the game, as demonstrators expressed their ire about the money spent to refurbish stadiums for next year's World Cup. □

Guatemala gunmen kill 11, wound others

SONIA PEREZ D.
Associated Press

SAN JOSE NACAHIIL, Guatemala (AP) — A group of men in a stolen car shot 29 people on the main street of a poor indigenous town in the mountains outside Guatemala City, killing 11 in an incident that some residents blamed on corrupt police officers. Officials blamed the attack on gang violence but that was greeted with skepticism by some residents of San Jose Nacahuil. Residents expelled the na-

tional police six years ago and set up a community police force that patrols with sticks and machetes, and officials said the community had low crime rates in recent years.

Eight of the dead were shot in a just-opened cantina, a one-story cinderblock building where a group of men were drinking beer and liquor around plastic tables. The majority of the wounded were shot in the street between the cantina and a second, older establishment owned by

the same local businessman. Two of those shot in the street died, along with a man shot in the second cantina.

Interior Minister Mauricio Lopez Bonilla said the National Civil Police sent a patrol car to the town Saturday night after receiving an anonymous call reporting fears of an imminent attack. Officers "determined that everything was OK and the patrol car left," he said. "One hour later, the attack happened."

A relative of the cantina

owner, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of official retaliation, said the owner reported that the police arrived without warning, said they were checking the permits for the new cantina and demanded a \$60 bribe to approve them. When the man refused, the relative said, the police told him to get all minors out of the bar and left.

"He came home, said the police had come to ask for the papers and asked him for 500 quetzales. □



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Map showing location of The Kitchen near Sun Plaza, Ex-Super Kong Hing, and Certified.



Despite trials, Team Aruba makes the show at number 15

ROCKINGHAM, N.C./

ORANJESTAD - Trevor Eman and Team Aruba took the Aruba.com / Alltel Wireless Mustang right down Broadway in somewhat tricky conditions during the final late night qualifying session at Dragstock X to land themselves in the number 15 spot in qualifying. The 4.129 elapsed time improved upon their earlier time of 4.152 and was enough to secure their spot to compete in eliminations and continue their Championship run.

Eman will be paired with Kevin Bleako for round one. Bleako qualified number two with a 4.079.

"Unfortunately, we had a rather frustrating day of qualifying," told Eman. "We are happy that we are at least in the show, but our performance hasn't been the way it usually is. Track conditions are tricky and at the same time we're battling a small



electrical gremlin that we cannot seem to pinpoint. Hopefully tomorrow we can clear up some issues with the racecar and take out Kevin Bleako in round one. We'll see what tomorrow brings." □

Sign up for Cool FM 98.9's 5K Neon Night Run/Walk!

ORANJESTAD - Monday, September 9th, 2013 is the official opening day to sign up for Cool FM 98.9's 5K Neon Night Run/Walk. You may sign up at IBISA and DH Nutrition Center in Ponton. The event will take place on Sunday, October 27 at 7:30pm. Sign up early and receive a complete package of everything you will need for this exciting and unique Run/Walk. Everyone will be in neon, and Elite will provide speakers and lights along the route to create a very unique experience! IBISA, Sport Caribe, Mary Joan Foundation and DH Nutrition Center are the sponsors for the event. Cool FM and IBISA would like to add that they will only be able to take up to 2,000 participants, so sign up early! □



Caribbean Queen Presents Artist Melisa Richardson



PALM BEACH - The Caribbean Queen store at the Palm Beach Plaza Mall is proud to introduce its Caribbean Queen for the month of September 2013, local artist Melisa Richardson, prominently displaying her cute, unique, and exciting accessories in the store.

"Don't underestimate the power of CUTE," says Melisa. "It is, after all, what compels me to push my





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creativity further every single day in order to create accessories that are unique, exciting, and naturally, cute!"

Melisa Richardson is a self-taught accessory designer. Born and raised on the island of Aruba, Melisa first showed interest in fashion as a young child. Her debut handmade creations were stylish dresses for her dolls. In her teens, she enjoyed decorating utilitarian schoolbags and pencil cases. She was not just crafty; she showed real interest in artistic expression and followed her creative urges right into Academie Beeldende Kunsten Maastricht, in the Netherlands, where she earned her bachelor's degree in fine arts & education.

Art motivates Melisa; however, in her final year at art school, she discovered her passion for handmade accessories that make the wearer feel unique. Melisa believes that everyone should feel beautiful and should show this feeling that comes from within on the outside.

And that is how MelisaMae

Designs was launched. It started as a small online store, and when Melisa moved back to Aruba, she took to Facebook and created a page to highlight MelisaMae Designs, which works on customized orders from home.

MelisaMae Designs also holds workshops that stimulate the creativity of attendees, inspiring pride in their own unique talents. Melisa also regularly participates at markets and expos, such as those organized by Ateliers '89. She hopes to one day have her own little accessory shop and expand her collections.

While she keeps track of trends, she is no follower. She favors the "vintage Caribbean" look by mixing different types of materials, such as glass, acrylic, fabrics, and wood, then applying her extra-special touch to the product. Her handcrafted accessories can all be categorized as adorable and cute!

Enjoy her accessories throughout the month of September at Caribbean Queen, Palm Beach Plaza Mall. □



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served from Chef Hernandez' kitchen every Monday. Whether choosing Fried Fish Basket for only \$15 or a delicious Red Snapper for \$20, you wish it was Monday every day! Bugaloe is known for fun and craziness, so it was only logical Chef Marc Hernandez likes to go wild when it comes to his cooking. Caught in the morning, served at night is the true Bugaloe

way, maybe this explains its popularity from the start. Crazy Fish Monday is served from 5.30 p.m. till 10 p.m. Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill is open daily from 9 a.m. till midnight. Start your day of right with a delicious cappuccino, or walk in to enjoy a casual lunch in between sunbathing. A few nights a week Bugaloe is host to some of the best live bands of Aruba, while you are savoring dinner and enjoying the beautiful Aruba Sunset! Don't forget to make one hour in the day even happier at Bugaloe's daily Happy Hour from 5 till 6 p.m. Reservations are not necessary, just follow your hips to the music and the fun and smiles saluting you! ☐





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Saints edge Falcons in Payton's return

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Drew Brees passed for 357 yards and two scores Sunday, and the New Orleans Saints held on for a 23-17 victory over the Atlanta Falcons to give coach Sean Payton a triumphant return from his bounty ban. Roman Harper secured the win when he intercepted a tipped fourth-down pass in the end zone with under a minute left. Brees connected with Marques Colston for a 25-yard touchdown pass during which the receiver also set a franchise mark for catches with 533. Brees also hit tight end Jimmy Graham for a 7-yard score in the third quarter. Matt Ryan passed for 304 yards and touchdown passes to Tony Gonzalez and Julio Jones. He also drove Atlanta to the Saints 3 in the final minute before falling just short.

CHIEFS 28, JAGUARS 2 JACKSONVILLE, Florida (AP) — Alex Smith threw two early touchdown passes, Kansas City's defense dominated all day and the Chiefs began the Andy Reid era with a victory at Jacksonville. Jamaal Charles ran for 77 yards and a touchdown before leaving the game with a quadriceps injury, but that was about the only negative for the Chiefs. Jacksonville advanced past its own 36-yard line just once, a stunning display of offensive futility for the rebuilding franchise. The Jaguars



New York Jets' Nick Folk (2) reacts after kicking a 48-yard field goal against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the closing seconds of an NFL football game, Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013, in East Rutherford, N.J. The Jets won 18-17.

Associated Press

finished with 178 yards, but for most of the game were challenging the team low of 117 yards set last year against Houston. It wasn't even close to the start the new coach Gus Bradley wanted, but it was a clear indication of how far the team has to go.

BEARS 24, BENGALS 21

CHICAGO (AP) — Jay Cutler passed to Brandon Marshall for the go-ahead touchdown in the fourth quarter, helping Chicago get the victory in Marc Trestman's coaching debut with the team. It wasn't quite the display the Bears were looking for after making some big changes in the offseason. But it was good enough.

The Bengals led by 11 in the third quarter and were up 21-17 early in the fourth when Tim Jennings jarred the ball from Mohamed Sanu following a reception and made the recovery. Chicago took over at its 19 and got an 8-yard run from Matt Forte on fourth-and-inches at the Bengals 27 to keep the drive going. Cutler then found Marshall in the front corner of the end zone for a 19-yard touchdown, giving Chicago a 24-21 lead with 7:58 remaining.

PATRIOTS 23, BILLS 21

ORCHARD PARK, New York (AP) — Stephen Gostkowski hit a 35-yard field goal with 5 seconds left to send New England to the road win.

Continued on Page 22

U.S. wins Walker Cup, routing Britain and Ireland

SOUTHAMPTON, New York (AP) — Nathan Smith won the deciding point in the United States' 17-9 victory over Britain and Ireland in the Walker Cup on Sunday, beating England's Nathan Kimsey 4 and 3 in the fifth singles match at

historic National Golf Links of America. The United States, ahead 8-4 entering the final day in the biennial amateur event, split the four morning foursomes matches and won seven of the 10 afternoon singles matches.

The U.S. leads the series 35-8-1. In 2011, Britain and Ireland won 14-12 at Royal Aberdeen in Scotland. The 35-year-old Smith, a four-time U.S. Mid-Amateur champion from Pittsburgh, won the par-3 13th and par-4 14th with pars and

ended the match with a halve for bogey on the par-4 15th. Alabama teammates Bobby Wyatt and Justin Thomas, 45-year-old Todd White, California's Michael Kim, Oklahoma State's Jordan Niebrugge and Stanford's

Patrick Rodgers also won singles matches. England's Matthew Fitzpatrick and Callum Shinkwin and Ireland's Kevin Phelan won their singles matches. Fitzpatrick, a freshman at Northwestern, is the U.S. Amateur champion. □

Team New Zealand overtakes Oracle to win Race 3

BERNIE WILSON

AP Sports Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Skipper Dean Barker kept Emirates Team New Zealand perfect in the America's Cup, rebounding from a penalty at the first mark and overtaking defending champion Oracle Team USA on the windward third leg to win Race 3 on Sunday.

Team New Zealand's 72-foot catamaran reeled in the American syndicate during a tacking duel sailing upwind toward the fog-shrouded Golden Gate Bridge. The Kiwis sailed into the lead about halfway up the leg and went on to win by 28 seconds.

The Kiwis need to win six more races to claim the oldest trophy in international sports for the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, which held the Auld Mug from 1995-2003.

Oracle Team USA, owned by software billionaire Larry Ellison of Oracle Corp., needs to win 11 races to retain the silver trophy. Oracle was docked two points by an international jury in the biggest cheating scandal in the regatta's 162-year history.

Race 4 was to start later in

the afternoon.

Oracle skipper Jimmy Spithill had an aggressive start and got his cat across the line first. Holding inside position at the reaching first mark, Spithill flew around the buoy and came within a few feet of Team New Zealand. Both teams flew protest flags and the Kiwis were penalized for not keeping clear. Barker had to slow down to clear the penalty.

Oracle led by 18 seconds after completing the upwind second leg. The boats headed to different sides of the course and the Kiwis began to show better speed upwind.

Oracle remained in the lead the first time the boats crossed.

Halfway up the mark, Oracle let the Kiwis tack toward the left-hand boundary. Because the boundaries are new to this Cup, a boat that has tacked onto port to avoid crossing the boundary has advantage. That helped the Kiwis take control. Team New Zealand led by 29 seconds rounding the windward gate mark and kept that margin at the downwind gate before making the turn and heading to the finish. □

Emirates Team New Zealand crosses the finish line to win the third race of the America's Cup sailing event against Oracle Team USA Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013, in San Francisco. In the background is the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

Associated Press



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Wrestling wins IOC vote for place in 2020 Olympics

AP Sports Writer

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Wrestling, a sport as ancient as the games themselves, is back in the Olympics after seven months in limbo and even more determined to keep its place for centuries to come. The International Olympic Committee fixed what it admits was a big mistake Sunday, voting wrestling back onto the program for the 2020 and 2024 Games. Presenting new leadership and a revamped sport, wrestling easily defeated bids from baseball-softball and squash to regain its Olympic status.

The result capped a frantic six-month campaign by the wrestling body FILA to save its Olympic status after the IOC executive board surprisingly cut it from the list of core sports in February.

"We are aware of our mistakes and they will not happen again," FILA President Nenad Lalovic said. "This crisis gave us the strength to change and we finally found out that we can change. This was the most valuable experience of all of this journey." Wrestling received 49 votes to win in the first round of the secret balloting by the International Olympic Committee. □

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Williams beats Azarenka for 5th U.S. Open, 17th Slam

HOWARD FENDRICH
AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Top-seeded Serena Williams won her fifth U.S. Open championship and 17th Grand Slam title overall by beating No. 2 Victoria Azarenka 7-5, 6-7 (6), 6-1 in a windy final.

Williams, who turns 32 on Sept. 26, has now won the sixth-most Grand Slam titles in history and one less than Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert. Williams collected a \$3.6 million prize, including a \$1 million bonus for producing the best results during the North American summer hard-court circuit leading up to the U.S. Open.

Helped by nine aces, one at 126 mph (203 kph), Williams improved to 67-4 with a career-best nine titles in 2013. Since a first-round exit at the 2012 French Open, Williams is 98-5 with 14 titles, winning four of the past six Grand Slam tournaments.

"Vika's such a great opponent, such a great fighter," Williams said of Azarenka, "and that's why she's been able to win multiple Grand Slams. That's why it was never over until match point."

This one did not come easily, even though it appeared to be nearly over when Williams went ahead by two breaks at 4-1 in the second set. Williams served for the match at 5-4 and 6-5 — only to have the gutsy Azarenka break each time.

This was a rematch of last year's final, also won by Williams in three sets, and two-time Australian Open champion Azarenka provided another challenge with her big swings.

"It is a tough loss, but to be in the final and play against the best player — who de-



Serena Williams reacts after defeating Victoria Azarenka, of Belarus, during the women's singles final of the 2013 U.S. Open tennis tournament, Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013, in New York.

serves to win today — it's incredible," said Azarenka, who is from Belarus. "I gave it all today. We showed our hearts. We fought hard."

Four times, Azarenka was only two points from taking the opening set. At one such moment, with Williams serving at deuce after a double-fault, she was called for a foot fault, erasing what would have been a 121 mph (195 kph) ace. There was another

foot-fault call in the second set, too. They brought back memories of the American's loss to Kim Clijsters in the 2009 semifinals, when Williams was docked a point, and later fined, for a tirade against a line judge over a foot-fault call.

There was no such outburst directed at officials this time, although there was a racket toss. After the call in the match's 10th game, Williams simply put a hand

to her face, composed herself, and won the point with a down-the-line backhand she celebrated with a fist pump, some foot stomping and a yell of "Come on!" Williams wound up holding there with an ace, part of what seemed to be a match-altering stretch. She won five consecutive games and 16 of 18 points to take the first set and go up a break in the second. Her lead grew to 4-1 in the

second set, before Azarenka made things competitive again. Azarenka is responsible for two of Williams' four losses this season. And entering Sunday, Azarenka was 31-1 on hard courts this season, and she showed why for portions of the final, playing far better than she had in her preceding six matches in New York.

But she simply could not keep pace with Williams, who eventually adjusted to her opponent and the blustery wind. Williams put aside her issues to finish with a 36-17 edge in winners.

The first time Williams served for the championship, at 5-4, Azarenka hit a cross-court forehand winner for break point, then forced a backhand long. Williams came right back to break for a 6-5 edge. But on her second chance to serve it out, she double-faulted to get broken for the fourth time Sunday.

A year ago, they played the first three-set women's final in New York since 1995. And they went the distance again, a total of 2 hours, 45 minutes, because Azarenka was superior in the tiebreaker.

When it came time to close the deal, Williams shined. She has six of the eight winners in the third set, forced Azarenka into 15 miscues, and soon enough, was hopping up and down after finishing with a service winner.

Azarenka faltered late, the way she did when losing the last four games in the 2012 final. She hit two of her seven double-faults while getting broken to 3-1 in the third set, then could only watch as Williams hit a pair of aces in the next game. □



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Semenya shows she's back in form with win in Rieti

ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

RIETI, Italy (AP) — Caster Semenya showed she's back in form following injury with a dominating win in the 800 meters at the Rieti World Challenge meeting Sunday.

Semenya, the 2009 world champion and 2012 Olympic silver medalist from South Africa, clocked 1 minute 58.92 seconds in the two-lap race, her best time this season. She finished far ahead of runner-up Nelly Jepkosgei of Kenya, who crossed in a personal-best 1:59.40. "That's awesome," a beaming Semenya said. "The race went according to plan."

Semenya missed last month's worlds in Mos-

cow due to a right knee injury and has her eyes set on next year's Commonwealth Games.

"It's fine but I'm not yet finished with rehab," Semenya said. "I need to finish that and start my buildup for next year. ... Hopefully next year I'll be good."

In the high jump, Olympic champion Anna Chicherova was beaten by fellow Russian Irina Gordeyeva. Gordeyeva cleared 1.99 meters while Chicherova came up short at 1.96.

The meet was dedicated to Pietro Mennea, the Italian former 200-meter Olympic champion who died in March at 60. Tommie Smith, the American known for his black power salute at the 1968 Olym-

pics, was on hand to remember Mennea.

Alberto Juantorena, the Cuban who swept the 400 and 800 at the 1976 Olympics, was also flown in for the occasion.

Smith and Juantorena were paraded around the track in vintage cars before the meet started and then awarded several of the winners.

In Mennea's honor, the rarely held 300-meters was run. Rusheen McDonald of Jamaica won in 31.97, breaking Mennea's meet record from 1979.

Wearing a tracksuit in army camouflage colors, Walter Dix of the United States won the 100 in 9.99 with Dwain Chambers of Britain a distant second in 10.09



South Africa's Caster Semenya runs on her way to win the the women's 800-meter competition at the IAAF Grand Prix in Rieti, Italy, Sunday, Sept. 8, 2012. Associated Press

and Ryan Bailey of the United States third in 10.10. Also, Olympic champion Sally Pearson of Australia dominated the 100 hurdles in a meet-record 12.64. In a stellar hammer throw competition featuring the entire men's and women's

podiums from last month's worlds, both silver medalists from Moscow won. Krisztian Pars of Hungary took the men's event with a throw of 79.80 and Anita Wlodarczyk of Poland won the women's event with a toss of 76.57. □

Geniez wins 15th Vuelta stage Nibali keeps lead

PEYRAGUDES, France (AP)

— Alexandre Geniez won the grueling 15th stage of the Spanish Vuelta ending with a summit finish in his home country of France, while Vincenzo Nibali fended off his rivals' attacks to maintain the overall lead on Sunday.

Geniez broke away on a solo escape before the last of four category-one climbs to claim the 225-kilometer (140-mile) stage starting in the principality of Andorra, passing through Spanish territory, and finishing at the Peyragudes summit.

The 25-year-old Geniez, riding for FDJ.FR, crossed the finish line in 6 hours, 20 minutes, 12 seconds. Michele Scarponi was second, more than three minutes behind, and Nicolas Roche

was third before the group of favorites finished together with Nibali in front.

"I wasn't able to enjoy it until the last two kilometers," Geniez said after the biggest victory of his career. "You never know if you are empty and it could mean the end. It has been my best day."

Nibali, the Giro d'Italia winner, showed his good form by staying pegged to Alejandro Valverde, Joaquim Rodriguez, and Christopher Horner each time they tried to pull away. Nibali kept his 50-second lead over Horner. Valverde is 1:42 behind the Italian, with Rodriguez trailing by 2:57.

"It was a tough day. It was very cold and windy," Nibali said. "Besides, Purito (Rodriguez) and Horner

tried to attack. I tried to attack as well, but with the wind blowing against me I couldn't pick up the pace. I felt strong but I preferred to save my energy for what's to come."

The Vuelta is proving as demanding as was expected when organizers announced that 13 of its 21 stages would be held in the mountains. Rain and cold temperatures forced 16 riders to retire— with some showing signs of hypothermia— during Saturday's uphill ride into Andorra. Another 10 riders, including world road race champion Philippe Gilbert and world time trial champion Tony Martin, couldn't continue during Sunday's stage that saw varying temperatures, showers and patches of fog. □

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Saints

Continued from Page 18

Tom Brady set up the decisive score by leading a 49-yard, 12-play drive during which he twice completed passes to convert third downs.

It was Brady's 36th career victory in which the Patriots were tied or trailed in the fourth quarter.

Brady finished 29 of 52 for 288 yards passing and two touchdowns in helping the Patriots win their season opener for the 10th straight season.

The new-look Bills nearly pulled off a stunning upset in the first game under coach Doug Marrone and rookie quarterback EJ Manuel, who completed 18 of 27 passes for 150 yards and two touchdowns.

INDIANAPOLIS 21, OAKLAND 17

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Andrew Luck ran 19 yards for the winning touchdown, giving Indianapolis its first opening-day win since 2009.

Luck was 18 of 23 for 178 yards with two touchdown passes, but earned his eighth career fourth-quarter comeback by scrambling for a score with 5:20 to go.

Oakland started Terrelle Pryor at quarterback. He was 19 of 29 for 217 yards and one TD, and he broke the Raiders' rushing record for a quarterback with 13 carries for 112 yards.

But he also threw two interceptions in the red zone, the second coming with 25 seconds left in the game.

LIONS 34, VIKINGS 24

DETROIT (AP) — Reggie Bush turned a short pass



New England Patriots' Stephen Gostkowski (3) kicks the game-winning field goal during the second half of an NFL football game against the Buffalo Bills, Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013, in Orchard Park. The Patriots won the game 23-21.

into a 77-yard touchdown in the third quarter and finished with 191 yards of offense to help Detroit pull away from Minnesota.

Joique Bell ran for two TDs, including a go-ahead score that gave the Lions their first lead early in the third quarter.

Matthew Stafford was 28 of 43 for 357 yards with two TDs. His last score was a 1-yard lob to rookie tight end Joseph Fauria with 6:47 left that sealed the win.

Adrian Peterson ran for a 78-yard TD on his first carry and scored on a 4-yard run to give Minnesota a 14-6 lead in the second. He ended up with 93 yards rushing.

JETS 18, BUCCANEERS 17

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP) — Nick Folk kicked a 48-yard field goal with 2 seconds remaining after Lavonte David's personal foul penalty kept New York's drive alive, and the

Jets pulled out an improbable opening victory.

With the Jets trailing 17-15 and time running out, rookie Geno Smith scrambled for 10 yards — and was shoved while he was out of bounds by David.

The 15-yard penalty gave the Jets the ball at the Buccaneers 30 and set up Folk's winning field goal on the next play.

Things appeared dim for the Jets just moments earlier when Rian Lindell kicked a 37-yard field goal with 34 seconds left.

Smith, making his first NFL start with Mark Sanchez out with a shoulder injury, made some mistakes — a fumble that led to a score and an interception — but was mostly solid while going 24 of 38 for 256 yards with a touchdown.

TITANS 16, STEELERS 9

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Tennessee's revamped defense sacked Ben Roethlisberger

Associated Press

five times and the Titans shut down the Steelers.

Chris Johnson ran for 70 clock-chewing yards, Jackie Battle bulled his way to a 3-yard touchdown in the second quarter, and Rob Bironas kicked three field goals for the Titans. Tennessee's new-look defense did the rest.

Pittsburgh managed just 195 total yards and lost a series of players to injury, including Pro Bowl center Maurkice Pouncey.

Pouncey left in the first quarter with a right knee injury and likely will miss an extended amount of time. The Titans gave up more points than any team in the NFL last season and brought in Gregg Williams as an assistant. His impact was immediate. Roethlisberger completed 21 of 33 passes for 191 yards and a late touchdown, but never got comfortable when the game was in doubt.

SEAHAWKS 12, PANTHERS 7

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (AP) — Russell Wilson threw for 320 yards for Seattle, including a 43-yard touch-down pass to Jermaine Kearse in the fourth quarter.

The Seahawks managed just two field goals before Kearse beat cornerback Josh Thomas down the right sideline for the go-ahead score with 10:13 left. The Panthers held Marshawn Lynch to 43 yards rushing, but Wilson picked up the slack by completing 25 of 33 passes.

The Panthers threatened to take the lead late, but safety Earl Thomas forced DeAngelo Williams to fumble at the Seattle 8. Defensive tackle Tony McDaniel recovered with 5:25 left. The Seahawks ran out the clock from there.

Carolina's Cam Newton was held to 125 yards passing and one touchdown, a 3-yard strike to Steve Smith in the first half.

DOLPHINS 23, BROWNS 10

CLEVELAND (AP) — Ryan Tannehill passed for 272 yards and a touchdown, leading the Dolphins to a win over the Browns, who fell to 1-14 in Week 1 since 1999.

Tannehill, who was given more offensive weapons for his second NFL season, threw a 34-yard TD pass to Brian Hartline in the third quarter and drove the Dolphins to a game-clinching TD in the fourth.

Daniel Thomas had a 1-yard scoring plunge with 6:48 left, putting the Dolphins up by 10.

Miami's Cameron Wake had 2½ sacks and the Dolphins' defensive line sacked Brandon Weeden six times. □

Microsoft works to save face after Xbox backlash

DERRIK J. LANG

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When it comes to hyping next-generation hardware, the video game industry doesn't typically opt for simplicity. However, during a presentation at the GameStop Expo in Las Vegas to promote the upcoming Xbox One console last week, a no-frills, old-school approach is exactly what Microsoft employed when confronted with a convention room full of passionate gamers.

There were no flashy videos, sensational demonstrations or celebrity appearances. Instead, Xbox Live programming director Larry "Major Nelson" Hryb candidly took questions on stage from the crowd for 30 uninterrupted minutes, a refreshing reprieve considering the backlash Microsoft has continued to endure since unveiling the Xbox One in May.

"Look, at Xbox, we really care about the community," Hryb replied when asked point-blank how Microsoft would win back consumers. "We're very focused on what is right for gamers. Everybody at Xbox is a gamer. It's not like we just show up, do our work and go home. We want to make this the best game system that you are going to own for the next 10 years."

The presentation was apparently the first stop of an apology tour for Microsoft, which originally said the successor to the Xbox 360 would be required to go online every 24 hours and limit how users could access previously purchased games. A month later, citing feedback from consumers, Microsoft Corp. announced it decided not

to implement such restrictions.

Microsoft's atypical about-face continued last month when the Redmond, Wash., company declared that an updated version of its Kinect sensor, which detects motion and voice, would no longer be required to operate the Xbox One. That turnabout came after the company, at events like the Electronic Entertainment Expo, defended how integral Kinect was to the Xbox One. Hryb said he'll embark on a cross-country tour this month, making stops in U.S. cities to similarly assuage concerns about the next-gen console — just like he did at last week's GameStop Expo. The 180-degree reversals and low-key repentance are unprecedented moves for a company like Microsoft, which once hired Cirque du Soleil to theatrically unmask the first Kinect.

Microsoft announced this week that the Xbox One will debut Nov. 22 — a week after Sony Corp. unleashes its PlayStation 4 console on Nov. 14. The PS4 will cost \$399 and feature comparable computing power, high-definition graphics and online features to the Xbox One. Microsoft's console is pricier at \$499, but the system comes bundled with a Kinect sensor.

"I've pretty much made up my mind that I'm getting a PS4 and not an Xbox," said Jeff Lane, a gamer from Reno, Nev., who paid \$100 for VIP access to the GameStop Expo. "I know Microsoft has changed course on a lot of their unfounded policies since they announced the Xbox One, but what's to stop them from just implementing them next year after



In this May 21, 2013 file photo, photographers crowd around Microsoft Corp.'s next-generation Xbox One entertainment and gaming console system after it was officially revealed, at an event in Redmond, Wash.

the console is out?"

The worries come at an important time for the gaming industry, which has seen sales slide in recent years as Microsoft's 7-year-old Xbox 360 and Sony's 6-year-old PlayStation 3 have entered their golden years. The arrival of Nintendo's Wii U last year didn't invigorate game sales, which research firm NPD Group said have dropped 9 percent over last year.

"Education is job one," said GameStop CEO Paul Raines at last week's event, which primarily served as the training grounds for the retailer's 5,000 managers. "We have thousands of people in classrooms upstairs receiving training on the Xbox One and others on the PS4. We're trying to arm our staff on how these devices will be different and how they'll work."

Raines said GameStop expects this fall's debut of the PS4 and Xbox One to make for the biggest console launch in history, while Microsoft announced that pre-orders for the third-generation Xbox have sold out faster than both the original Xbox and Xbox

360, which was released in 2005 and has been the best-selling console for the past two years.

No doubt Microsoft could use a boost to its bottom line in the coming months. The company's stock fell this week after announcing it was spending \$7.2 billion to buy Finnish smartphone maker Nokia in an effort to better compete in the hot mobile market. And Microsoft absorbed a \$900 million charge in its last quarter to account for the flop of its Surface tablet, which runs a version of its Windows operating system. David Wesley, author of "Innovation and Marketing in the Video Game Industry," believes Microsoft is

Associated Press

headed in the right direction with its refocused Xbox One strategy. Wesley and other analysts don't expect the fallout from this year's botched unveiling of the Xbox One to ultimately affect sales or the public's perception of the console this holiday season.

"The reality is these concerns likely won't affect Microsoft's marketing of the Xbox One," said Wesley. "The challenge for Microsoft is conveying the value of the console without overhyping aspects that don't really meet expectations. They don't want to create such high expectations that people are let-down when the console is actually launched." □

Lenovo sees PC market growth in hybrid models

BERLIN (AP) — Lenovo is hoping hybrid computers — which can turn from laptops into tablets with a flip of the lid — will spur growth in the ailing PC market and win back consumers who are attracted by sleek, lightweight tablets, the

company said.

To this end the Chinese company is unveiling a range of new computers based on its Yoga platform and aimed at buyers who want to be able to use their device in the office, in bed or in the kitchen. □

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US Job market's vital signs:

Unemployment is down, but US remains reluctant on hiring

PAUL WISEMAN

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just how sturdy is the U.S. job market?

That's the key question the Federal Reserve will face when it decides later this month whether to reduce its economic stimulus.

The answer depends on where you look.

The economy has added jobs for 35 straight months. Unemployment has reached a 4½-year low of 7.3 percent. Layoffs are dwindling.

Yet other barometers of the job market point to chronic weakness:

The pace of hiring remains tepid. Job growth is concentrated in lower-paying industries. The economy is 1.9 million jobs shy of its pre-recession level — and that's not counting the additional jobs needed to meet population growth. Nearly 4.3 million people have been unemployed at least six months.

What's more, employers have little incentive to raise pay. Many unhappy employees have nowhere else to go.

Still, when it meets Sept. 17-18, the Fed is expected to reduce its \$85 billion a month in bond purchases by perhaps \$10 billion. Its purchases have helped keep home-loan and other borrowing rates low to try to encourage consumers and businesses to borrow and spend more.

Here's a look at the job market's vital signs as the Fed's decision nears:

UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate slid in August to 7.3 percent, its lowest level since December 2008. Unemployment had peaked in



A crowd of job seekers attends a health care job fair in New York. Just how sturdy is the U.S. job market? That's the key question the Federal Reserve will face when it decides later in September 2013, whether to reduce its economic stimulus.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

October 2009 at 10 percent and has since fallen more or less steadily. Since then, the number of people who say they have jobs has risen by 5.7 million. And the number of those who say they're unemployed has dropped by nearly 4.1 million.

That's the good news behind the tumbling unemployment rate.

But the rate has been falling, in part, for a bad reason: People are dropping out of the labor force. Once people without a job stop looking for one, the government no longer counts them as unemployed.

Some are retiring. Some are young adults who have chosen to go to college rather than brave a tough job market. Some have gone on disability. And some have given up the job search, discouraged by repeated rejections.

The percentage of people

either working or looking for work — the so-called labor force participation rate — fell last month to a 35-year low: 63.2 percent. If the participation rate were at the pre-recession level of 66 percent, up to 6.8 million more people could be counted as unemployed. And the unemployment rate could be as high as 11.2 percent.

The 4 million-plus Americans who have been unemployed for six months or more are down from a peak of 6.7 million in April 2010. Yet before 2009, the United States had never seen long-term unemployment surpass 2.9 million, even during the deep recessions of the mid-1970s and early 1980s.

Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke has called long-term unemployment a "national crisis" that's causing workers to lose skills.

JOB CREATION

Since the Great Recession officially ended in June 2009, the American economy has added nearly 5.6 million jobs. Yet that hasn't been nearly enough to fill the hole left by the recession. The United States still has 1.9 million fewer jobs than the 138 million it had when the recession officially began in December 2007.

If hiring continued at August's 169,000-job monthly pace, the job market wouldn't return to pre-recession levels for almost another year.

And that's before taking population growth into account. Heidi Shierholz, an economist at the liberal Economic Policy Institute, calculates that the U.S. job market is 8.3 million jobs short of where it needs to be to keep up with a growing population and reduce unemployment to pre-recession levels.

But job creation seems to be slowing. From January through April this year, employers added a robust 205,000 jobs a month. In the four months since, they've added only 155,000.

"Job gains are just not good enough," says Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economic Advisors.

LOW-QUALITY JOBS

The jobs the economy is generating this year have tended to be low-paying, part-time or both. More than 654,000 — or 45 percent — of the 1.44 million jobs added this year come from three generally low-paying industries: department stores and other retailers; hotels and restaurants; and temporary services. And nearly 60 percent of the jobs added this year have been part-time, though economists caution that the part-time employment figures are volatile. The lower quality of the available jobs is one reason pay has stagnated. The average hourly earnings of private-sector employers haven't kept up with inflation since the end of the recession.

"More and more, America's jobs are not supporting America's families," said Christine Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project, which advocates on behalf of low-wage workers.

LAYOFFS AND HIRING

The American labor market is divided between haves and have-nots. If you have a job, your position is safer than it's been in years. If you don't have one and aren't willing to settle for lower-wage work, the job search can be brutal. □



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BUSINESS NEWS BRIEFS

Mulally says no plans to leave Ford early

BERLIN (AP) — The chief executive of Ford Motor Co. says he has no plans to leave the company early after reports that he might be tipped to take a leading role at software maker Microsoft Corp. Ford said last year that Alan Mulally would stay with the company through at least 2014. The 68-year-old this weekend batted aside talk of an early exit, telling reporters in Berlin that "I absolutely personally love serving Ford and we have no changes planned going forward." Microsoft said last month that its CEO, Steve Ballmer, would retire next year. Ford unveiled its new S-Max concept car and a limited edition of the Ecosport crossover at Germany's annual IFA technology show. □

US security panel OKs Smithfield Inc. sale

SMITHFIELD, Virginia (AP) — Smithfield Foods Inc. says that a U.S. committee that reviews mergers between American companies and those overseas has given clearance to the pork producer's proposed sale to a Chinese company. Smithfield said this weekend that the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States gave clearance to its proposed sale to Shuanghui International Holdings Ltd. The committee reviews overseas transactions for national-security implications. Smithfield also says the proposed buyout received clearance from the Ukraine government. Hong Kong-based Shuanghui agreed to in May to buy Smithfield in a deal valued at \$7.1 billion, including debt. Smithfield shareholders are scheduled to vote on the transaction on Sept. 24. □

Delta to list with S&P 500 index of stocks

ATLANTA (AP) — Delta Air Lines Inc. is scheduled to be listed among the stocks in the Standard & Poor's 500 index next week, a sign of the airline's turnaround since it filed for bankruptcy protection eight years ago. The S&P index is made up of 500 large U.S. companies whose shares trade on either the New York Stock Exchange or the Nasdaq Stock Market. Companies can benefit from being in the index because investment funds that track the index must buy their stock. Atlanta-based Delta, the world's second-biggest airline by passenger traffic behind United, will join the index after trading ends Tuesday. It will replace BMC Software Inc., which is being bought by Bain Capital. Southwest Airlines Co. is the only carrier now in the S&P index. □

Managers of 'broke buck' fund back deal

NEW YORK (AP) — The managers of a money market fund whose failing assets raised fears about other such funds during the 2008 financial crisis have agreed to pay \$10 million to settle a class-action lawsuit by investors. The money will go into what's left of Reserve Management Co.'s Reserve Primary Fund. The managers also agreed to give up \$42 million of their \$72 million in claims for legal and other expenses against the fund. Managers Bruce Bent Sr. and his sons Bruce Bent II and Arthur Bent III admitted no wrongdoing in the proposed settlement, filed late Friday in federal court in New York. The Reserve Primary Fund "broke the buck" — its assets fell below the level needed to fully repay investors — after investing heavily in bonds from Lehman Brothers. □

China:

August exports accelerate, imports slow

JOE McDONALD
AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China's August export growth accelerated, adding to signs of a gradual recovery for the world's second-largest economy, while import growth weakened. Exports rose 7.2 percent to \$190.7 billion, acceler-

fell to a two-decade low of 7.5 percent in the second quarter but the latest industrial data suggest the slowdown might be leveling out.

Communist leaders have tried to perk up growth with higher spending on railway construction and tax cuts for small business-

ing in November but are rumored to be locked in heated debates over the details.

Much of China's slowdown over the past three years is due not to global economic malaise but to communist leaders' efforts to shift the basis of growth from exports and investment to



People walk through a commercial street decorated with colorful umbrellas in Shenyang in northeast China's Liaoning province. China's August export growth accelerated, adding to signs of a gradual recovery for the world's second-largest economy, while import growth weakened. Exports rose 7.2 percent to \$190.7 billion, accelerating from July's 5.1 percent growth, customs data showed Sunday. Imports rose 7 percent to \$162.1 billion, but that was down from July's 10.9 percent. (AP Photo)

ating from July's 5.1 percent growth, customs data showed Sunday. Imports rose 7 percent to \$162.1 billion, but that was down from July's 10.9 percent.

"China's August trade report showed further decent recovery in the export sector," said JP Morgan economist Haibin Zhu in a report.

Stronger sales of Chinese goods abroad are a positive sign for communist leaders who want to avoid job losses in export-driven manufacturing.

China's economic growth

es. But they have resisted appeals for more stimulus, saying they want to focus instead on reforms to make the economy more efficient and productive.

"The combination of steady growth and muted inflation provides a good environment for the authorities to push forward long-term structural reforms," said UBS economist Tao Wang in a report last week.

Chinese leaders are expected to announce a reform package after a Communist Party meet-

more self-sustaining domestic consumption.

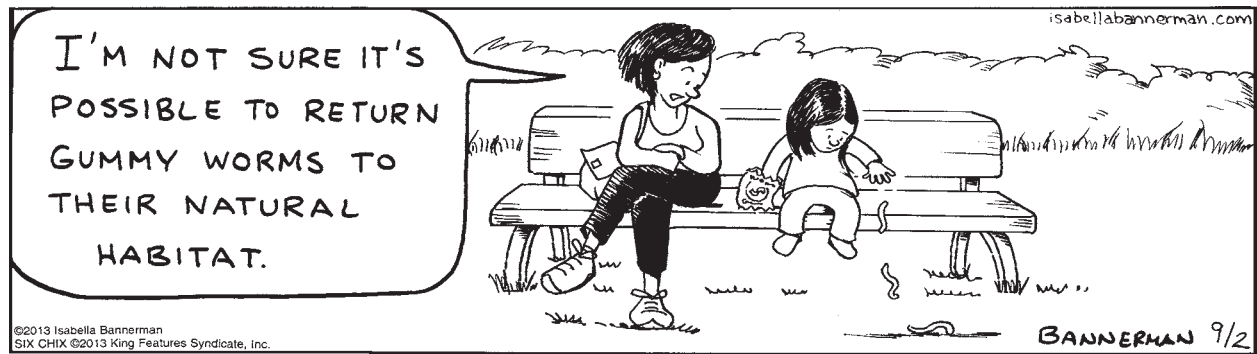
Beijing has tightened controls to cool a construction and investment boom. But consumer spending is rising more slowly than planned, which has left the country more dependent on exports than Chinese leaders want.

Manufacturing activity expanded in August but export orders declined due to weak U.S. and European demand. Factory output, construction and auto sales also have improved in recent months. □

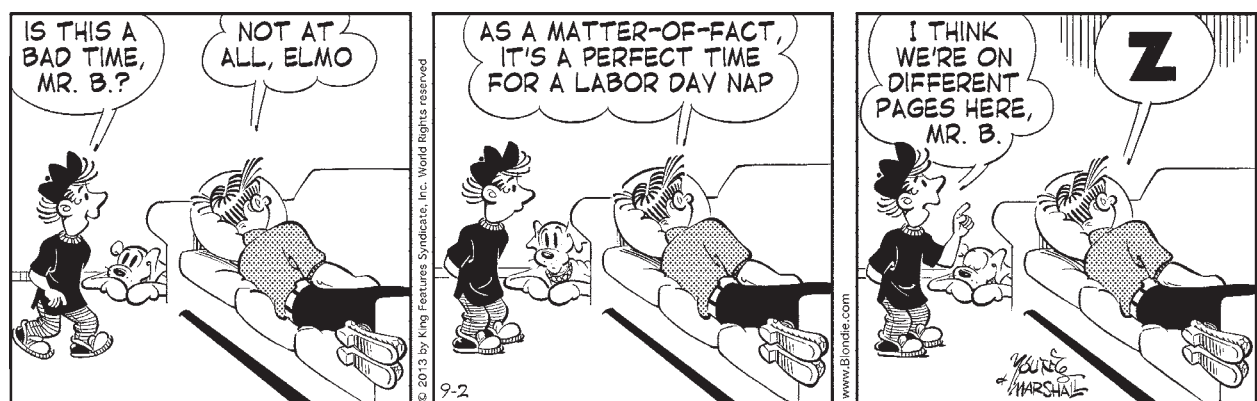
Mutts



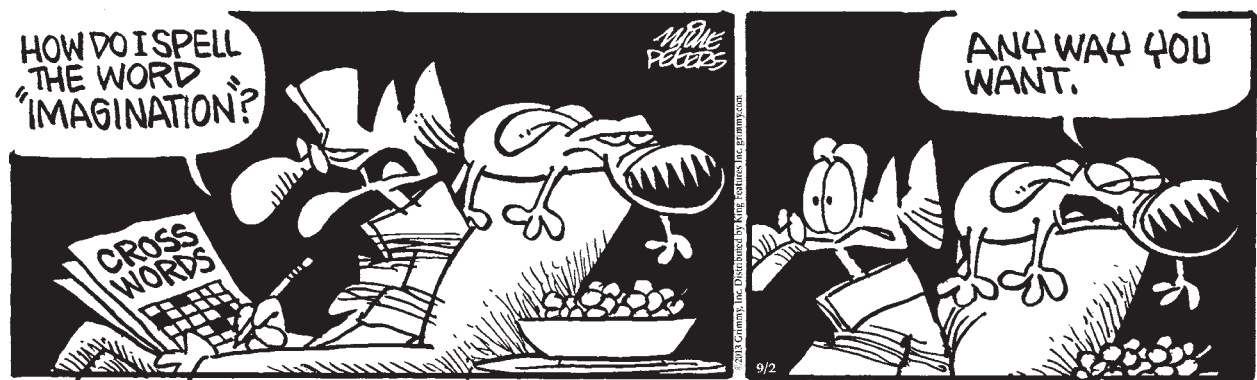
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| | 1 | 6 | 5 | | 2 | 9 | 7 | |

Difficulty Level ★

9/02

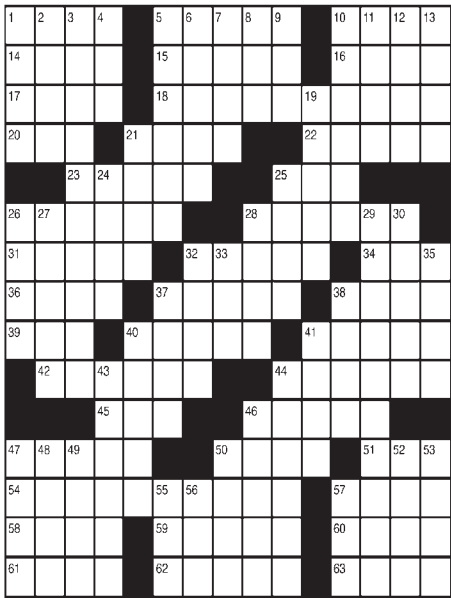
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Saturday's puzzle answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 8 |
| 9 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 9 |
| 1 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| 8 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 2 |
| 7 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| 5 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 |
| 3 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 7 |

ACROSS

- True statement
- Early butterfly growth stage
- Custard pie
- "... was I ere I saw Elba"
- Homer classic
- Gray wolf
- Cruel
- Triumphant
- Begley & Asner
- Actor Gregory
- Hollow inside
- Make points
- Rail systems
- Singer Pearl
- Remained
- Not qualified
- Hot and tangy
- Distance around a track
- Make a tiny cut
- Get on the scale
- Greek cheese
- Rush
- March or May
- Subdued
- Youngest brother of Prince Charles
- Hug
- Help
- Hayes or Hunt
- Mass of bees
- ... up; absorb
- Suit accessory
- Islamabad residents
- Floor pads
- "See no ... hear no..."
- Got up
- Get ready, for short
- Shrub
- Declare untrue
- Gingrich's namesakes
- Choir song



9/2/13

- Place for the feeding and care of horses
- Wonderland visitor
- Actor Schroder
- Brewer's tub
- Hoopla
- Shoddily built
- Closed circle
- Lie next to
- Too inquisitive
- Pass along
- Robert Frost or Walt Whitman
- Cut with shears
- Engrave
- "Little Orphan"

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

| | | |
|------------|------------|-------|
| DARE | CRASH | SPUD |
| OVEN | HAIKU | HATE |
| DIED | ADDITIONAL | |
| ODD | SPAS | SUSHI |
| | USHER | CAT |
| SOCIAL | ROASTS | |
| ALARM | STOIC | RAM |
| FITS | SHEAF | LALA |
| EVE | SPEAR | TONER |
| EDWARD | MOUSSE | |
| | ANY | PATTI |
| AWORD | SASS | TAT |
| PAKISTANIS | RICE | |
| SILL | ALONE | HOME |
| OLLAY | NEWS | ONES |

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9/2/13

DOWN

- Renown
- In the sack
- ... ads; section of a newspaper
- ...gallon hat; cowboy's item
- 38 Rider's fee
- 40 Injures
- 41 Discussion
- 43 With caution
- 44 Discontinues
- 46 Raise
- 47 Drove too fast
- 48 Whitecap, e.g.
- 49 Related

- Winter flakes
- Article; object
- Sports network
- Light brown
- "Roses ... red, violets..."
- Speedometer letters

Simple looks deceiving at NY Fashion Week

SAMANTHA CRITCHELL
AP Fashion Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The simple things can be the hardest to do in fashion, because you have to do them well. Take the white shirt. Designers Peter Som and Max Azria both said a plain white button-down shirt is their favorite thing to see on a woman, and versions

it is all about the tweaks and the details. Is the cut cropped (a silhouette of the season, whether you like it or not!), are there details or embellishments at the collar?" she said by email. "Those details are what feminize a white shirt and make it special."

ALEXANDER WANG

As if fashion fans didn't al-

would wear if they were invited to the country club over a weekend. Eventually, though, those morphed into laser-cut leather, which seems more of a fit for his customer. Erin Wasson, a longtime friend of Wang's, walked in a white jumper — sans shirt — that hid the designer's name under each pleat, visible with each step.



Models walk in the finale of the Alexander Wang Spring 2014 collection during Fashion Week in New York, Saturday, Sept. 7, 2013.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

of it have been on nearly every catwalk during the previews of Spring 2014 at New York Fashion Week that entered their third day Saturday. But these basics are far from simple for designers. Prabal Gurung said that with such crisp pieces, you can't hide behind embellishment or interesting fabric. When it's simple, it has to be perfect. "Ease isn't easy," echoed Jason Wu, who showed feather-light and sometimes sheer slip dresses that were carefully constructed. "The things you think are going to be simple can sometimes be really hard." Lucky magazine Editor in Chief Eva Chen wore a white button-down to previews on Friday and said the versions popping up on runways — whether as detail peeking out from a dress or reflecting spare 90s minimalism — are "nothing if not wearable — with jeans and ballet slippers, with a ballgown, and everything in between." "This season, when it comes to choosing a white shirt,

ready know his name and the youthful, hipster aesthetic he owns at New York Fashion Week, Alexander Wang spelled it all out for them at his runway show Saturday. Several of the models who zigzagged the complicated catwalk at the West Side pier that the designer often uses wore looks adorned with "Wang." Wang, who now splits his time between his own label in New York and Balenciaga in Paris, sat Kanye West, Kerry Washington and Miguel in his front row and first came out with uncharacteristic crisp and clean looks. Think of the cotton miniskirts and cropped button-downs that his downtown muse

It's "Wang-xiety," said Courtney Love from her front-row seat.

PRABAL GURUNG

Prabal Gurung's spring collection was built on the idea of "the idealized woman." But don't confuse Gurung's feminine muse with a girly one: The sheath dresses with unexpected cutouts and harnesses, and the pearlescent pink shirtdress and sky-blue draped dress with a cascading back ruffle were more chic than sweet. He also showed a crisp white shirt — seemingly simple from the front — that had an open back engineered with a clear, plastic harness. □

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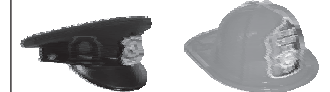
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NASA launches robotic explorer to moon

MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

NASA's newest robotic explorer rocketed into space late Friday in an unprecedented moonshot from Virginia that dazzled sky watchers along the East Coast of the U.S.

But the LADEE spacecraft quickly ran into equipment trouble, and while NASA assured everyone early Saturday that the lunar probe was safe and on a perfect track for the moon, officials acknowledged the problem needs to be resolved in the next two to three weeks.

S. Peter Worden, director of NASA's Ames Research Center in California, which developed the spacecraft, told reporters he's confident everything will be working properly in the next few days.

LADEE's reaction wheels were turned on to orient and stabilize the spacecraft, which was spinning too fast after it separated from the final rocket stage, Worden said. But the computer automatically shut the wheels down, apparently because of excess current. He speculated the wheels may have been running a little fast. Worden stressed there is no rush to "get these bugs ironed out."

The LADEE spacecraft, which is charged with studying the lunar atmosphere and dust, soared aboard an unmanned Minotaur rocket a little before midnight.

"Godspeed on your journey to the moon, LADEE,"



In this photo provided by NASA, an unmanned Minotaur rocket carries NASA's newest robotic explorer, the LADEE spacecraft, which is charged with studying the lunar atmosphere and dust, after launching to the moon from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility on Virginia's Eastern Shore on Friday, Sept. 6, 2013.

Associated Press

Launch Control said. Flight controllers applauded and exchanged high-fives following the successful launch. "We are headed to the moon!" NASA said in a tweet.

It was a change of venue for NASA, which normally launches moon missions from Cape Canaveral, Florida. But it provided a rare light show along the East Coast for those blessed with clear skies.

NASA urged sky watchers to share their launch pictures through the website Flickr, and the photos and sighting reports quickly poured in from New York City, Boston, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, New Jersey, Rhode Island, eastern Pennsylvania and Virginia, among other places.

The Lunar Atmosphere and Dust Environment Explorer or LADEE, pronounced "LA'-dee," is taking a roundabout path to the moon, making three huge laps around Earth before getting close enough to pop into lunar orbit.

Unlike the quick three-day Apollo flights to the moon, LADEE will need a full month to reach Earth's closest neighbor. An Air Force Minotaur V rocket, built by Orbital Sciences Corp., provided the ride from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility.

LADEE, which is the size of a small car, is expected to reach the moon on Oct. 6. Scientists want to learn the composition of the moon's ever-so-delicate

atmosphere and how it might change over time. Another puzzle, dating back decades, is whether dust actually levitates from the lunar surface.

The \$280 million moon-orbiting mission will last six months and end with a suicide plunge into the moon for LADEE.

The 844-pound (380-kilogram) spacecraft has three science instruments as well as laser communication test equipment that could revolutionize data relay. NASA hopes to eventually replace its traditional radio systems with laser communications, which would mean faster bandwidth using significantly less power and smaller devices.

"There's no question that

as we send humans farther out into the solar system, certainly to Mars," that laser communications will be needed to send high-definition and 3-D video, said NASA's science mission chief, John Grunsfeld, a former astronaut who worked on the Hubble Space Telescope. It was a momentous night for Wallops, which was making its first deep-space liftoff. All of its previous launches were confined to Earth orbit.

"It was just a beautiful evening," Grunsfeld said. NASA chose Wallops for LADEE because of the Minotaur V rocket, comprised of converted intercontinental ballistic missile motors belonging to the Air Force. A U.S.-Russian treaty limits the number of launch sites because of the missile parts.

All but one of NASA's previous moon missions since 1959, including the manned Apollo flights of the late 1960s and early 1970s, originated from Cape Canaveral. The most recent were the twin Grail spacecraft launched almost exactly two years ago. The military-NASA Clementine rocketed away from Southern California in 1994.

Wallops will be back in the spotlight in less than two weeks. The Virginia-based Orbital Sciences will make its first delivery to the International Space Station, using its own Antares rocket and Cygnus capsule. That commercial launch is scheduled for Sept. 17. □

Rare brain disease concerns in U.S. after death

HOLLY RAMER

Associated Press

CONCORD, New Hampshire (AP) — Public health officials believe one person in the U.S. has died of a rare, degenerative brain disease, and they say there's a remote chance up to 13 others in multiple states were exposed to the fatal illness through surgical equipment.

Dr. Joseph Pepe, president of Catholic Medical

Center in New Hampshire, said officials are 95 percent certain that a patient who had brain surgery in May and died in August had sporadic Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

The disease progresses rapidly once symptoms appear and is always fatal, usually within a few months. But the symptoms can take decades to show up. They include behavior changes, memory loss, im-

paired coordination and other neurological problems.

Nearly 90 percent of cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease happen spontaneously, when an agent causes proteins in the brain to fold incorrectly. Because those abnormal proteins can survive standard sterilization practices, there is a small risk of exposure for those who had surgery after the patient who died,

Pepe said.

"The risk of exposure is extremely low, but it's not zero," he said.

The hospital has notified eight of its patients who may have been exposed, and hospitals in other states are working to do the same because some of the surgical equipment was rented and used elsewhere, state public health director Dr. Jose Montero said. He would not identify

the other states but said no more than five additional patients were potentially exposed.

Pepe said the potentially exposed patients range in age from mid-30s to mid-80s.

"They took it very well. I don't believe that people were angry or extremely emotionally upset," he said. "We did the best job we could in trying to alleviate their fear." □

'Riddick' illuminates box office with \$18.7M debut

DERRIK J. LANG

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Riddick" is seeing light at the box office.

The science-fiction thriller starring Vin Diesel as an intergalactic criminal with built-in night vision debuted in first place with \$18.7 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. "Riddick" is the third installment in the series, following the \$11.6 million debut of 2000's "Pitch Black" and the \$24.3 million launch of 2004's "The Chronicles of Riddick."

"Riddick," which finds the alien anti-hero stranded and pursued by bounty hunters on a hostile world, served as a passion project for Diesel and series writer-director David Twohy. After the studio originally passed on funding a third chapter, the pair acquired the rights to the character from Universal and independently secured their own film fi-

nancing.

"I don't think there were any mistakes made here," said Nikki Rocco, head of distribution for Universal, which returned to the fold to distribute "Riddick" in North America. "Vin wanted to do it. He had to do it on his time."

He was very, very busy with 'Fast & Furious,' and I think everything came together as he wanted it to come together."

"Riddick" also fared well internationally, bringing in an additional \$7.4 million in 22 markets such as the United Kingdom and Hong Kong.

"Lee Daniels' 'The Butler' fell to second place with \$8.9 million in its fourth weekend at the box office, bringing its total domestic haul to \$91.9 million. The Spanish-language comedy "Instructions Not Included" earned third place in its expanded second weekend with \$8.1 million, giving it a total of \$20.1 million in U.S.



This film image released by Universal Pictures shows Vin Diesel in a scene from "Riddick."

Associated Press

and Canadian theaters. "Typically, the weekend after Labor Day is one of the slowest weekends of the year," said Paul Dergarabedian, box-office analyst for Hollywood.com. "By Universal releasing a brand-new sci-fi movie with one of the biggest stars in

the world, they took advantage of that and came out on top with the No. 1 movie."

It gave the weekend a nice boost." Dergarabedian said box office totals are up more than 26 percent this weekend over last year when

"The Possession" scared up \$9.3 million in the top spot in its fourth weekend. "Riddick" will face stiff competition next weekend when horror sequel "Insidious: Chapter 2" and "The Family" starring Robert De Niro and Tommy Lee Jones hit theaters. □

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Standing ovation for McConaughey at Toronto

JAKE COYLE

AP Entertainment Writer

TORONTO (AP) — The Toronto International Film Festival greeted Matthew McConaughey with a rousing standing ovation for his performance in "Dallas Buyers Club."

The film premiered Saturday night, giving the movie-going world its first glimpse of McConaughey's highly-anticipated performance as a Texas man diagnosed with HIV in the 1980s. Based on the true story of Ron Woodroof, the film follows his frustration with the Food and Drug Administration and his enterprising smuggling of more promising drugs.

For the role, McConaughey lost nearly 50 pounds (22.5 kilograms), and appears startlingly gaunt throughout the film. After the film, though, McConaughey told the audience his weight loss wasn't the hard part.

"That was the easy decision," he said. "I would have been embarrassed standing here looking like I do now playing the guy. That really wouldn't have worked."

McConaughey's performance as a hard-drinking,



Actors Jennifer Garner and Matthew McConaughey arrive at the premiere of "Dallas Buyers Club" on day 3 of the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival at The Princess of Wales Theatre on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2013 in Toronto.

Associated Press

homophobic rodeo cowboy whose illness changes him in many ways for the better was immediately hailed as a sure bet for a best actor Oscar nomination.

Since sinking into a series of unremarkable romantic comedies, McConaughey has remade his career with a string of more ambitious work, including the male-stripper drama "Magic Mike" last year, and the coming-of-age-tale "Mud" earlier this year. He also co-stars in the upcoming Martin Scorsese film "The Wolf

of Wall Street."

"Matthew McConaughey is doing something spectacular with his life, with his career, and I wanted to be a part of that," said Jared Leto, who also gives a stand-out performance as a drug-addicted transsexual. "He's doing some of the most incredibly inspiring work. That was a huge part of my decision. said, 'If he's willing to walk down this path, I gotta get in the ring with him. That's somebody I want to dance with.'"

"Dallas Buyers Club" will be released Nov. 1. □



In this Dec. 4, 2012, file photo, American television personality and actress Kristin Cavallari poses for a photo in New York.

Associated Press

Cavallari made to post bond after traffic stop

EVANSTON, Illinois (AP)

— Police say former reality TV star and fashion designer Kristin Cavallari was stopped for speeding in the Chicago suburb of Evanston.

Because she was driving without an Illinois license, Cavallari was escorted to the Evanston police station to post \$150 bond.

The wife of Chicago Bears

quarterback Jay Cutler was driving with a California license. But Illinois law requires those living in the state for more than 90 days to get an Illinois license.

The 26-year-old former star of MTV's "Laguna Beach" and "The Hills" was stopped Friday while crossing into Evanston from Chicago.

Police would not say how fast she was going. □

AP Source: Bruno Mars to sing at Super Bowl half



HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Pro Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Grammy-winner Bruno Mars will sing at halftime of the Super Bowl in February, a person familiar with the NFL's entertainment plans told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no announcement had been made.

The official word is expected to come at an event in New York's Times Square on Sunday.

The NFL's regular season began on Thursday, and

the Super Bowl will be on Feb. 2 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Halftime shows have drawn more than 100 million television viewers in the United States alone in past years. Beyonce was the star of this year's Super Bowl halftime show in February in New Orleans, where the Baltimore Ravens beat the San Francisco 49ers 34-31.

Mars is one of pop music's top acts, with several No. 1 hits, including his most recent, "When I Was Your Man."

The 27-year-old singer-

songwriter-producer was honored for best male video and choreography for "Treasure" at the MTV Video Music Awards last month.

Mars, who was born Peter Hernandez, released his platinum-selling debut, "Doo-Wops & Hooligans," in 2010, and released his second album, "Unorthodox Jukebox," last year. His hits include "Locked Out of Heaven," "Just the Way You Are" and "Grenade." Some recent halftime performers at the NFL's championship game were Madonna in 2012. □

This Aug. 25, 2013 file photo shows Bruno Mars performing at the MTV Video Music Awards at the Barclays Center in the Brooklyn borough of New York. Mars will be the halftime performer for next year's Super Bowl. The Grammy-winning hitmaker helped make the announcement on Fox NFL Sunday, Sept. 8 in New York.

Off To The Mayoral Races



GAIL COLLINS
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Big primary election for mayor of New York City next week, people. Let's take a look at what's been going on. If you stick with me, I promise animal stories. Including kittens. Right now the big news is on the Democratic side where Bill de Blasio, the current public advocate, has been shooting ahead in the polls. Skyrocketing! Perhaps this is because he has one of the most interesting families in the history of politics, including an African-American wife who says she only dated women until she fell in love with de Blasio, and a 16-year-old son, Dante, who made a really lovely TV ad about his father. By now, more New Yorkers may be aware of Dante's spectacular Afro than any other factor in the entire campaign. So it definitely could be the family. It could also be because de Blasio is nearly 6 1/2 feet tall. New Yorkers like to think big. It would probably not be because of his work as public advocate. The New York City public advocate does not really have any work to do. His job is mainly to call news conferences and denounce things. We have quite a few elective posts like that around here. But it could be the carriage horses. We will get to them in a minute. When the race began, the two big names were Christine Quinn, the City Council speaker, and Bill Thompson, the former city comptroller. Thompson is low-key. So low that Chris Smith of New York magazine interviewed an enthusiastic woman at a Thompson rally who said that in 2009 she had voted "for the opposite of Bloomberg. The Democrat. Whoever that was." It was Thompson. Quinn, who would be both the first female mayor and the first openly gay mayor in city history, was the early favorite. But now the latest Quinnipiac poll has her struggling with Thompson for second place, while de Blasio is threatening to sew up the nomination in the first round by winning more than 40 percent of the vote. It is possible that Quinn is having a hard time because she's a woman. Really, unless you're Hillary Clinton, New York is tough. Also, she is the candidate most identified with Michael Bloomberg. We feel as if Bloomberg has been running the city since the signing of the Treaty of Ghent. And don't discount the Cen-

tral Park carriage horses. Animal rights advocates have long yearned to abolish the industry, and Quinn is the only major Democrat who disagrees. The horses are very well protected by regulation - they have to have five weeks of out-of-town vacation a year. French workers do not have as good a holiday package as the Central Park carriage horses. However, they do have to walk through traffic, which makes many people uncomfortable. The horses became a huge issue early in the campaign, when there was an entire mayoral forum devoted to the subject of animal protection. In it, John Catsimatidis, one of the Republican candidates, described how his wife tried to save the family's aged cat with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Quinn did not attend the forum. Neither did Joe Lhota, the Republican front-runner, who made news the other day when he criticized transit officials for closing down two subway lines for more than an hour after two lost kittens wandered onto the tracks. (The other candidates said they would have shut down the lines to save the cats. Anthony Weiner claimed he would have thrown his body over the electrified rail. Anthony Weiner is still not going to be elected mayor.) But Quinn, who owns two rescue dogs, was identified by the carriage horse crusaders as Public Enemy No. 1. Meanwhile, de Blasio, who vowed to retire the horses "first day I'm mayor," became their hero. (De Blasio seems to be hedging on the timing issue, perhaps realizing that putting the carriage industry at the tiptop of your mayoral to-do list sounds a tad over the top. "It will not be my first act, but it'll be something I'll do right away," the candidate said in a radio interview this week.) None of this is a big deal for the average New Yorker; it doesn't come up on the campaign trail unless there are people waving "Christine Quinn Hates Animals" signs. What we have here is a lesson in intensity of preference. The animal rights folks started early and drew a bunch of wealthy donors, some of whom had long-running issues with Quinn that had no relation to four-legged friends. They ran tons of ads, organized phone banks and showed up with their protest signs, throwing the campaign off-stride. Then de Blasio popped up as the change candidate, running to everyone else's left. New Yorkers may look loopy or out of control to the outside world, but when it comes to running the city, we generally pick candidates who are, one way or another, going to rein things in. Maybe this year, New York liberals are ready to party. If so, it'd be the first time, really, since John Lindsay. Who was 6-foot-4. □



The Right Questions On Syria



NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF
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Critics of U.S. military action in Syria are right to point out all the risks and uncertainties of missile strikes, and they have U.S. public opinion on their side. But for those of you who oppose cruise missile strikes, what alternative do you favor? It's all very well to urge the United Nations and Arab League to do more, but that means that Syrians will continue to be killed at a rate of 5,000 every month. Involving the International Criminal Court sounds wonderful but would make it more difficult to hammer out a peace deal in which President Bashar Assad steps down. So what do you propose other than that we wag our fingers as a government uses chemical weapons on its own people? So far, we've tried peaceful acquiescence, and it hasn't worked very well. The longer the war drags on in Syria, the more al-Qaida elements gain strength, the more Lebanon and Jordan are destabilized, and the more people die. It's admirable to insist on purely peaceful interventions, but let's acknowledge that the likely upshot is that we sit by as perhaps another 60,000 Syrians are killed over the next year. A decade ago, I was aghast that so many liberals were backing the Iraq war. Today, I'm dismayed that so many liberals, disillusioned by Iraq, seem willing to

let an average of 165 Syrians be killed daily rather than contemplate missile strikes that just might, at the margins, make a modest difference. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks the number of dead in the civil war, is exasperated at Western doves who think they are taking a moral stance. "Where have these people been the past two years?" the organization asks on its website. "What is emerging in the United States and United Kingdom now is a movement that is anti-war in form but pro-war in essence." In other words, how is being "pro-peace" in this case much different in effect from being "pro-Assad" and resigning oneself to the continued slaughter of civilians? To me, the central question isn't, "What are the risks of cruise missile strikes on Syria?" I grant that those risks are considerable, from errant missiles to Hezbollah retaliation. It's this: "Are the risks greater if we launch missiles, or if we continue to sit on our hands?" Let's be humble enough to acknowledge that we can't be sure of the answer and that Syria will be bloody whatever we do. We Americans are often so self-absorbed as to think that what happens in Syria depends on us; in fact, it overwhelmingly depends on Syrians. Yet on balance, while I applaud the general reluctance to reach for the military toolbox, it seems to me that, in this case, the humanitarian and strategic risks of inaction are greater. We're on a trajectory that leads to accelerating casualties, increasing regional instability, growing strength of al-Qaida forces, and more chemical weapons usage. Will a few days of cruise missile strikes make a difference?

I received a mass email from a women's group I admire, V-Day, calling on people to oppose military intervention because "such an action would simply bring about more violence and suffering. ... Experience shows us that military interventions harm innocent women, men and children." Really? Sure, sometimes they do, as in Iraq. But in both Bosnia and Kosovo, military intervention saved lives. The same was true in Mali and Sierra Leone. The truth is that there's no glib or simple lesson from the past. We need to struggle, case by case, for an approach that fits each situation. In Syria, it seems to me that cruise missile strikes might make a modest difference, by deterring further deployment of chemical weapons. Sarin nerve gas is of such limited usefulness to the Syrian army that it has taken two years to use it in a major way, and it's plausible that we can deter Syria's generals from employing it again if the price is high. The Syrian government has also lately had the upper hand in fighting, and airstrikes might make it more willing to negotiate toward a peace deal to end the war. I wouldn't bet on it, but, in Bosnia, airstrikes helped lead to the Dayton peace accord. Missile strikes on Assad's military airports might also degrade his ability to slaughter civilians. With fewer fighter aircraft, he may be less able to drop a napalm-like substance on a school, as his forces apparently did in Aleppo last month. A brave BBC television crew filmed the burn victims, with clothes burned and skin peeling off their bodies, and interviewed an outraged witness who asked those opposed to military action: "You are calling for peace. What kind of peace are you calling for? Don't you see this?"

At Palm Beach Plaza Mall:

Aruba's Majestic Carnival Season Comes To Life!

PALM BEACH - Palm Beach Plaza Mall new majestic carnival season has started at Aruba's largest mall. The Aruba Carnival is a thrilling show of over-the-top pageantry, produced by thousands and delighting and uniting the entire country. Here's the scoop on how it began. Carnival was born



in 1954, as a series of small street festivals. The Tivoli Club, Aruba's oldest private social club, was the first to have a pre-Lenten celebration in Oranjestad in February 1944. The Allied victory of World War II was commemorated by an Aruba Festival - a large parade in San Nicolas comprised largely of Caribbean-English immigrants who came to Aruba to work at the Lago Oil Refinery. The first steel and brass bands debuted a few years later and small parades sprouted here and there. Today Palm Beach Plaza Mall will have a great Carnival Show where you can experience for yourself the taste of Aruba's Carnival culture with the op-



portunity to take pictures with the majestic carnival dancers with carnival costumes. Come and enjoy the show! □



SHOPPING

AT PALM BEACH PLAZA MALL

SteelPan
Night

every tuesday
8pm-10pm

COME AND ENJOY
ARUBA'S OWN
STEELPAN MUSIC AT
PALM BEACH
PLAZA MALL

Carnival
NIGHT

at Palm Beach
Plaza Mall

EVERY MONDAY 8:00pm

**BREAKFAST
LUNCH DINNER**

AT PALM BEACH PLAZA MALL



Alex Croes